ROLLING STONES
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THE TRUE CONFESSIONS OF
DEBBIE HARRY

# MOJO
Music Magazine

148 REVIEWS
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INTERVIEW!

THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF
NEIL YOUNG
"ALL HELL'S GONNA BREAK LOOSE!"

LOU REED
BY LAURIE ANDERSON

R.E.M.
"WE SURVIVED EVERYTHING!"

NICK CAVE
GHOSTEEN: THE ★★★★★ REVIEW

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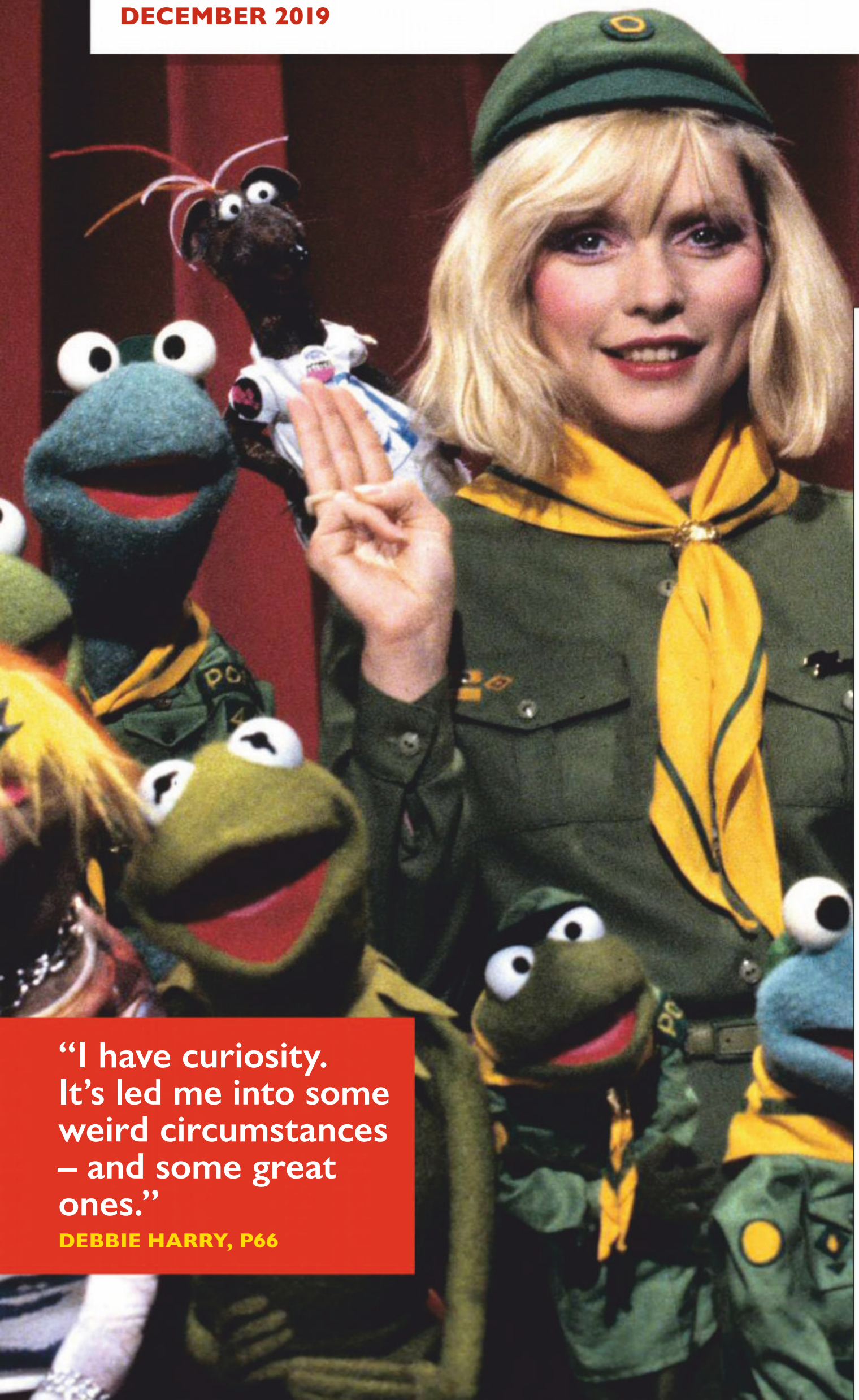
DECEMBER 2019 Issue 313



"I have curiosity. It's led me into some weird circumstances – and some great ones."

DEBBIE HARRY, P66

## FEATURES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**40 BETTY WRIGHT** How to survive and thrive in showbiz's rigged game, with one of '70s soul's great unsung voices. "Don't cry over spilt milk," she advises.

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**52 CATE LE BON** In her west Wales hometown with Britain's most unusual songwriter, fêted by John Cale, Deerhunter and more for psychedelic spirit and studio suss.

**56 LOU REED** As a book of his complete lyrics emerges, Reed's partner Laurie Anderson offers blazing insight into his world – Rotten Rita, Newspaper Joe and all.

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## COVER STORY


**72 NEIL YOUNG** From high up in the Rockies, the patron saint of Doing Your Thing delivers his latest thunderbolt, forged with the help of weed hits, eco ire and rock's most storied backing band: Crazy Horse.


Shutterstock

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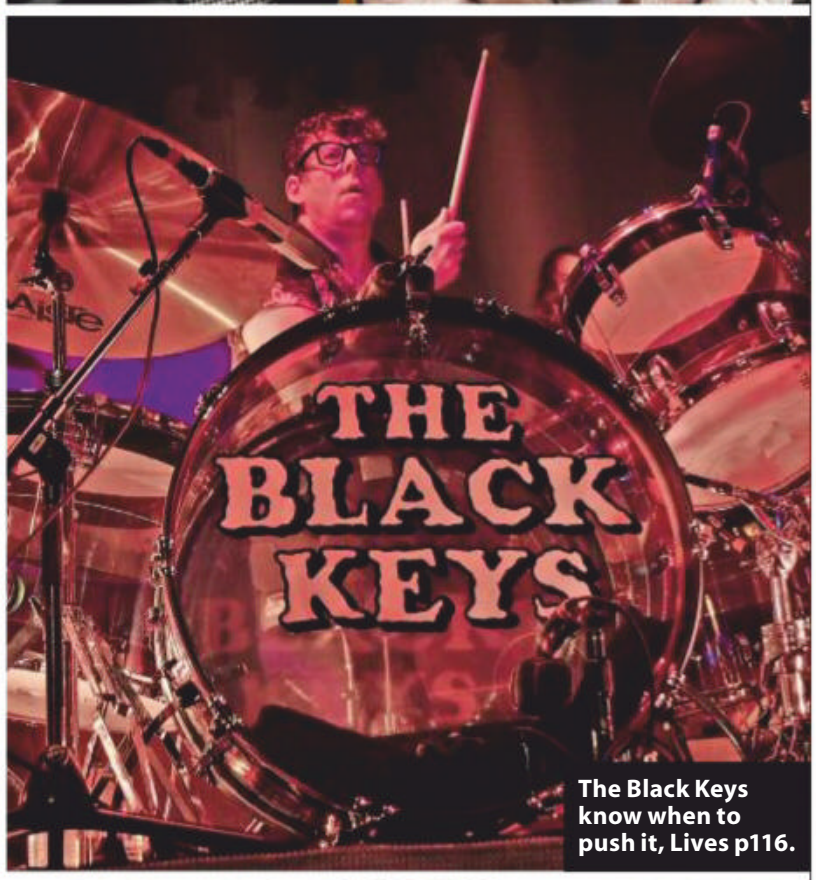


The Black Keys know when to push it, Lives p116.

Jeff Lynne boldly goes, Lead Album p84.

# MOJO

## REGULARS


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**130 HELLO GOODBYE** Birmingham sex city was Stephen Duffy and Duran Duran's romo-rendezvous. It was too beautiful to last.


## WHAT GOES ON!


**14 THE KINKS** Ray and Dave Davies, and Mick Avory, in the pub in north London? With plans for drama and a new edition of *Arthur*? Ray gets comfy in the snug and tells us what's what, and when, with this new burst of activity.

**18 BILL FAY** The reclusive wonder-worker of devotional folk breaks cover to reveal all about his new album and its unexpected pursuit of stillness, assisted by former members of Oasis and The Style Council.

**20 ANGEL OLSEN** The chameleon-like, elusive talent talks changing the scenery, the joy of C90s and feline friends.

**21 MADNESS** They've been going One Step Beyond for untold years and have never written a book – until now! Monsieur Barso and Suggs have their say on the hows, whys and whatnot of being Nut-Nut-Nutty.

**22 THE CLASH** As *London Calling* reaches its big 40th birthday, Westway historian Robert Gordon McHarg III has played an absolute blinder with an accompanying treasure-filled scrapbook. Prepare to jaw-drop, Last Gang bangers.


## MOJO FILTER


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**100 REISSUES** Bob Dylan Bootleg Series (with added Cash), Prince, Bowie and more.

**112 BOOKS** Prince's posthumous memoir, Jethro Tull, Fred Neil, Jeff Buckley and more.

**114 LIVES** Richard Thompson's 70th birthday bash in London, The Black Keys in Los Angeles.


## THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDE...

### Laurie Anderson

Anderson's music, words and ideas have bewitched since 1981's O Superman. Her moving essay on late husband Lou Reed's lyrics – taken from I'll Be Your Mirror (Faber) out in November – starts on p56. *Songs From The Bardo*, her LP with Tenzin Choegyal and Jesse Paris Smith, is out now.

### Ethan Russell

The first band Russell photographed was Blue Cheer, but the California native was still a novice lensman when he arrived in the UK in 1968. Less than a year later, he had become court snapper to Britain's rock aristocracy. His shots of The Rolling Stones – telling the story of their watershed *Let It Bleed* LP – are previewed from p44.

### Quinton Winter

Quinton is an award-winning and New York Times best-selling illustrator. A proud MOJO contributor since 1998, he's also a founding member of The Millionaire Designer's Club. See more artwork on his website at www.quintonwinter.com, follow him on @quintonon on Instagram and see this month's Lead LP, p85.

Quinton Winter,

# RICHARD DAWSON

# 2020

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# RAGGED GLORIES

## MOJO PRESENTS 15 EPIC JAMS FROM KURT VILE, DINOSAUR JR, LOW, BIG THIEF, TY SEGALL, STEPHEN MALKMUS AND MORE!

### 1 DINOSAUR JR
### LOST ALL DAY

**Few guitarists have channelled Neil Young's electric sound as potently and creatively as J Mascis, another single-minded maestro whose virtuosity is deployed in the most offhand of ways. Lost All Day comes from 2016's *Give A Glimpse Of What Yer Not*, the third Dinosaur Jr album since their hugely satisfying reunion.**

"Lost All Day" Written by Joseph Donald Mascis Jr. Performed by Dinosaur Jr. Courtesy of Jagjaguwar Published by Spam As The Bread Music (BMI) Administered by BMG Rights Management

### 2 GARCIA PEOPLES
### HIGH NOON VIOLENCE

**Recently, a clutch of new jam bands have emerged in the States, entranced by the Dead but with an aesthetic more indie-rocker than stoned fratboy. New Jersey's Garcia Peoples are in the vanguard, as you can hear on this ornately lurching folk-rocker.**

"High Noon Violence" by Garcia Peoples (Tom Malach (ASCAP), Daniel Arakaki (ASCAP), Cesar Arakaki (ASCAP), Derek Spaldo (ASCAP), Patrick G. Gubler (ASCAP)) Published by F3 Publishing (ASCAP). © 2019 Beyond Beyond Is Beyond Records, from the album *Natural Facts*; https://beyondbeyondisbeyondrecords.bandcamp.com/

### 3 THE DREAM SYNDICATE
### STILL HERE NOW

**Birthed in LA's early '80s Paisley Underground scene of the, Steve Wynn and his cohorts have enjoyed an expansive second life since they reformed in 2012; enduring masters of a frayed, wiry psych-rock.**

"Still Here Now" by The Dream Syndicate (Steven Wynn/Mark Walton/Jason Victor/Dennis Duck/Chris Cacavas) published by Poisoned Brisket (BMI) /Let's Eat Music (BMI)/Jason Victor (BMI)/Blue Eel Music (BMI)/BMG Rights Management. From the album *These Times* ℗&© 2019 The Dream Syndicate, under exclusive license to Anti, Inc. http://www.thedreamsyndicate.com/these-times.html

### 4 KURT VILE ONE TRICK PONIES

**As with Neil Young, Vile's laidback hippy vibe conceals a vigorous and uncompromising personal vision. Last year, Vile told MOJO about his acceptance into Young's circle. "They all love me," he said. "They're like, 'You gotta watch this guy, Neil.'"**

"One Trick Ponies" ℗ 2018 Matador Records Limited Written by Kurt Vile Published by Third Side Music ISRC No. US-MTD-18-11829 Taken from the album *Bottle It In* [OLE1146] Licensed courtesy of Matador Records Limited By arrangement with Beggars Group Media Limited www.matadorrecords.com

### 9 LOW WITCHES

**The Duluth trio's hushed signature sound has often obscured Alan Sparhawk's enduring debt to Neil Young. It comes to the fore, however, on this molten classic from 2011. "All you guys out there gonna wish you were Al Green," he sings; other role models may spring more immediately to mind.**

"Witches" Composer: Sparhawk/Parker Lyrics: Sparhawk/Parker Publisher: 1238 Music (BMI) administered by Domino Publishing Company Of America, Inc. ℗&© 2011 Sub Pop Records taken from the album *C'mon*

### 10 BIG THIEF NOT

**"For me to really get into music, it really has to shake me and get me in the guts," Big Thief's Adrianne Lenker told MOJO last month. That certainly holds true for this standout from *Two Hands*, their second album of 2019. Exceptional guitar fireworks begin at 3:21.**

"Not" ℗2019 4AD Limited Written by Adrianne Lenker Published by Domino Publishing ISRC No. GB-AFL-19-00267 Taken from the album *Two Hands* [4AD0180] Licensed courtesy of 4AD Limited By arrangement with Beggars Group Media Limited www.4ad.com

### 11 PARTICLE KID
### RADIO FLYER

**There's an auspicious Neil Young connection here: Particle Kid is the solo project of Micah Nelson – son of Willie, brother of Lukas and key player in Young's frequent backing band, Promise Of The Real. Amid the lysergic disorientations of Radio Flyer, the kinship is clear.**

"Radio Flyer" by Particle Kid (Nelson) published by Jacob Micah Nelson (BMI). ℗&© 2019 Particle Kid. Under exclusive license to OAR. From the album *Window Rock* (OAR); https://www.overseasartistsrecordings.com/

### 12 THALIA ZEDEK
### WHAT I WANTED

**Zedek is a noise-rock vet with Live Skull and Come on her lengthy CV, who has long understood how to transform blues-grunge ballads into mantric slow-burns. The outstanding What I Wanted comes from 2018's *Fighting Season* – an LP which, perhaps not coincidentally, also features J Mascis.**

"What I Wanted" by Thalia Zedek Band (Thalia Zedek), published by Thrill Jockey Records ℗&© 2018 thaliazedekpublishing (BMI) adm Bug Music c/o BMG/Chrysalis, from the album *Fighting Season* (21/09/2018 Thrill Jockey Records)

Noel Conrad, Jake Morris, Levi Walton, Ethan Covey, James Rexroad, Naomi Yang, Juan Carlos Quindos de la Fuente, Den e Segall

THE JAM GOES ON FOREVER! THIS MONTH, TO COMMEMORATE the return of Neil Young and Crazy Horse, MOJO has rounded up 15 acts still dedicated to the transformational power of electric guitars. Here are the Children Of The Horse, unfettered by a need to keep their sound neat and tidy, dedicated to the most rugged and elemental of freak-outs. "Crazy Horse are willing to jump off a cliff with Neil," their producer and engineer John Hanlon tells MOJO in our cover story. "It's like improvisational jazz, but it's not jazz."

So it is with these liberated players, all of whom have been inspired by the longform explorations of Crazy Horse, and those of other untrammelled free spirits like the Grateful Dead. "[Crazy Horse] should've been shot at birth," David Crosby once adjudged, confounded by their fundamental lack of polish. But for many, that rawness and unpredictability has provided an entry point to an elevated musical state. Cue hurricanes…

## 5 ONE ELEVEN HEAVY TOO MUCH TOO MUCH

A rowdy underground supergroup of sorts, the Anglo-American shitkickers of One Eleven Heavy here find a ramshackle groove that's not too far from that of *Tonight's The Night*-era Neil. Watch out for that hang-loose honky-tonk, Jack Nitzsche-style piano from Hans Chew.

"Too Much, Too Much" by One Eleven Heavy (James Toth (BMI)). © 2019 Beyond Beyond Is Beyond Records, from the album *Desire Path*; https://beyondbeyondisbeyondrecords.bandcamp.com/

## 6 MIKAL CRONIN SHOW ME

Strong echoes of Down By The River at the start of this new release from the Californian singer-songwriter and sometime bass-playing accomplice of Ty Segall. But Show Me has unexpected further dimensions: a heavy workout that blossoms into string-enriched chamber pop.

"Show Me" from the Merge Records album *Seeker* ℗&© 2019 Merge Records All songs written by Mikal Cronin All songs published by Pop Goblin Publishing (ASCAP) ISRC: USMRG1970002

## 7 TY SEGALL ALTA

Workaholic garage rock auteur Ty Segall has tried his hand at most things this past decade; 2019's *First Taste* is an album of fuzzy grunge constructed entirely without guitars. They're front and centre, though, on this seething anthem from his 2018 career-topping tenth album, *Freedom's Goblin*. Listen to those amps burn at the death.

"Alta" by Ty Segall Music Publisher: Domino ℗&© 2018 Drag City, Inc. Taken from the album *Freedom's Goblin*

## 8 STEPHEN MALKMUS AND THE JICKS SHIGGY

Like Segall, the quixotic Malkmus also went on a weird synth tangent in 2019 (for the *Groove Denied* album). But Shiggy, from 2018's *Sparkle Hard*, asserts his bona fides – earned during his Pavement days – as a self-effacing guitar hero for a generation who didn't think they needed one.

"Shiggy" Stephen Malkmus & The Jicks Written by Stephen Malkmus (Treble Kicker Music) Taken from the album *Sparkle Hard* (Domino Recording Co. Ltd)

## 13 CHRIS FORSYTH DREAM SONG

A pulsating showcase for how more can sometimes mean more, Dream Song is 10 minutes and 42 seconds of premium spacerock bliss, directed by the exceptional Philadelphia-based guitarist (and onetime Richard Lloyd pupil) Chris Forsyth. Vocals come from Rosali Middleman.

"Dream Song" by Chris Forsyth (Forsyth) Prospect Heights Music (ASCAP) (All rights administered by Domino Publishing Company of America, Inc.) From the album *All Time Present* (No Quarter) / www.noquarter.net

## 14 ISRAEL NASH A COAT OF MANY COLORS

All ravishing hippy fantasias from his ranch at Dripping Springs in the Texas Hill Country, Israel Nash's cosmic take on Americana is maybe a little woody and delicate for Crazy Horse. No mistaking its debt to Neil Young, though, especially on this steel and harmony-drenched highlight from the 2015 album, Israel Nash's Silver Season.

"A Coat Of Many Colors" (Israel Nash) published by BMG ℗&© 2015 Loose Music, from the album *Israel Nash's Silver Season*

## 15 ARBOURETUM CALL UPON THE FIRE

This Baltimore band have often found a sweet spot where Crazy Horse and Fairport Convention intersect: protean stomps, with elaborate folk-rock given significant extra heft. This mystical head-nodder from their ninth, and most recent album, 2017's *Song Of The Rose*.

"Call Upon the Fire" by Arbouretum (Heumann, Carey, Allender, Pierce), published by Thrill Jockey Records ℗&© 2017 Arbouretum BMI, from the album *Song Of The Rose* (24/03/2017 Thrill Jockey Records)

**"EVERYBODY CAN DO WHAT THEY LIKE …THEY SHOULD!"**

**NEIL YOUNG HITS A NEW HIGH! INTERVIEW BEGINS ON PAGE 72**

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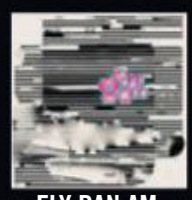

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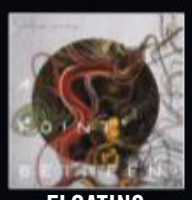

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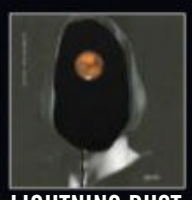

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# ALL BACK TO MY PLACE

## THE STARS REVEAL THE SONIC DELIGHTS GUARANTEED TO GET THEM GOING...

## Stuart A. Staples

VOICE OF TINDERSTICKS

**What music are you currently grooving to?**

**Mac Miller**'s *Swimming*. It's a great piece of work, obviously tinged with sadness, but it doesn't make it better because he died so young. The composition, the depth, the feeling – there's a real joyousness in that creativity. I'm trying to extricate myself, but my wife likes it.

**What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?**

**Nina Simone**'s *Wild Is The Wind*. She kept it so minimal, though she could do everything.

**What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?**

**Showaddywaddy**'s Under The Moon Of Love, from a shop called Simons in Gedling in Nottingham. I don't know if I was a fan, but I was glued to Top Of The Pops and I had enough money. And we did keep watching a clip of them doing synchronised dancing moves, on a tour not long ago.

**Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?**

The French drummer **Thomas Belhom**, though he'd call himself a 'melodic percussionist'. A unique, player who's so connected to the ideas inside him at that moment.

**What do you sing in the shower?**

I'm not a big shower singer, but something on the new album [*No Treasure But Hope*] came from singing in the bathroom. The bathroom in my studio/home was built to be a reverb chamber anyway.

**What is your favourite Saturday night record?**

**Gabor Szabo**'s *Dreams*. He's a virtuoso but it's kind of raggedy, and so alive inside itself. It sets the mood.

**And your Sunday morning record?**

**Bob Marley**'s *Soul Rebels*. It's how I like to hear him, simple and stripped.

*No Treasure But Hope is released on November 15 on City Slang.*

## Ralph McTell

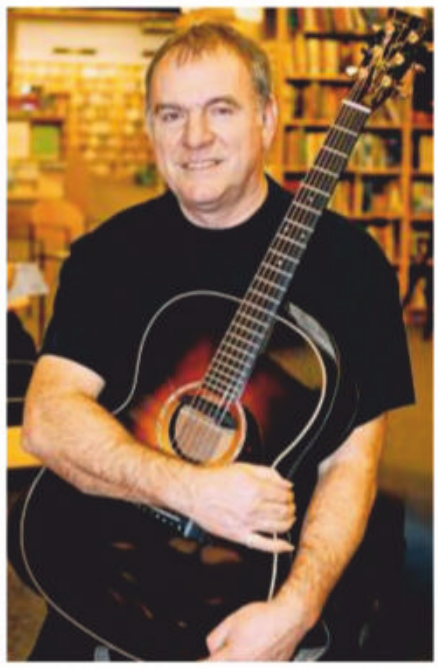
OUT ON THE STREETS

**What music are you currently grooving to?**

Grooving? I've never felt the need to express myself in dance. But if I was bringing someone back home I'd try and play them something they'd never heard. The late and very great **Maartin Allcock** did an arrangement of Imagine, which is an extraordinary tour de force. And *The Wishing Tree* by **John Doyle**, **John McCusker** and **Mike McGoldrick** – a wonderful, celebratory fusion of Irish and Scots influences.

**What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?**

*Good Old Boys* by **Randy Newman**. Such honesty. And it's got the best song in the world on it – Louisiana 1927.



Getty, Greg Waterman, Dave Hartley/Shutterstock

**What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?**

A 45 of Bye Bye Love by **The Everly Brothers**, from the Diamond Record Shop near West Croydon station.

**Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?**

I suppose **Woody Guthrie**, wandering the world with my bedroll on my back, playing simple and direct songs about the dignity of the working classes.

**What do you sing in the shower?**

I don't, I get in and get out. But I do sing around the house, earworms like Rose, Rose I Love You [a 1951 hit for **Frankie Laine**]. So catchy! And I whistle, much to the embarrassment of my boys when they were little – people should whistle more.

**What is your favourite Saturday night record?**

For me, the expectation of Saturday night seldom lives up to its promise, so I'll say (Looking For) The Heart Of Saturday Night by **Tom Waits**. You can nod your head in agreement when you open the second bottle of red wine. I met Tom Waits once, in the Troubadour. We played a game of craps, he took five dollars off me and disappeared into the night.

**And your Sunday morning record?**

To ease into it, Michael McGoldrick playing a slow air on the uilleann pipes, or maybe Lord Mayo off ***The Chieftains 3***. Gorgeous, soulful and plaintive.

*Ralph's Hill Of Beans is out now on Leola.*

## Beth Hart

BANG BANG BOOM BOOMER

**What music are you currently grooving to?**

When I paint or cook I listen to music. I've got a six-CD box of everything **Dinah Washington** did live, and that's so amazing. She was one of my mom's favourites too, so it makes me think of her. If I'm cooking I might listen to **LaVern Baker**. So great, a real deal Baptist gospel singer with a giant barrel of a voice. Gardening I do in total silence.

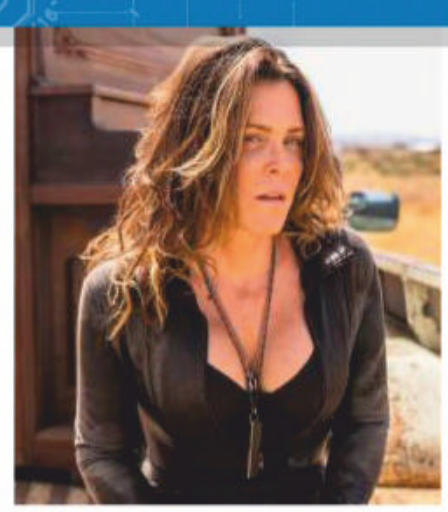
**What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?**

*Blues In The Night Volume One: The Early Show* by **Etta James** – it's just her in a supper club, so intimate, and you can hear how she's grown, with that low, more resonant end. She was at her peak in her forties and fifties. I heard it when I was 16 and I only just found out there's a *Late Show* as well!

**What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?**

God! It was probably the soundtrack to Annie. My mother took me to see it at the theatre somewhere in Los Angeles and they were selling it in the lobby afterwards. I was five or six and I learned it backwards and forwards.

> "LaVern Baker had a giant barrel of voice."
>
> **BETH HART**



**Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?**

None. There are so many in so many genres that I adore. But I'll say **Beethoven**.

**What do you sing in the shower?**

I really don't feel the need, I spend so many hours a day doing it.

**What is your favourite Saturday night record?**

Saturday In The Park by **Chicago**. It's happy! But every night is Saturday night for me. To be honest, sometimes I don't know what year it is.

**And your Sunday morning record?**

I might have jazz or classical on in the car. Every once in a while, I'll be struck by a new artist and play them 24/7. I did that with **Amy Winehouse**. I knew she was a genius people will still be listening to in 50 years.

*War In My Mind is out now via Provogue; Beth tours the UK in February 2020.*

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# Theories, rants, etc.

MOJO welcomes letters for publication. Write to: MOJO Mail, Academic House, 24-28 Oval Road, London NW1 7DT. E-mail: mojoreaders@bauermedia.co.uk

"THE MORE YOU THINK, THE MORE YOU stink" might not be the ideal motto for a magazine with MOJO's aspirations to authority and wisdom. Nevertheless, the instructions of Neil Young and Crazy Horse's old producer David Briggs have a certain raw appeal. How can a group of musicians untether themselves from expectation, and tap into the most intuitive and spontaneous forms of expression? According to what Young tells MOJO's Tom Doyle this month, the means to that end for Crazy Horse are manifold: high altitude, no setlists, no rehearsals, a little weed. "That's the focus, y'know," he reveals, in a wide-ranging and entertaining new interview.

Rather like Crazy Horse jams, this latest edition of MOJO contains many unexpected digressions. In the midst of our epic interviews and reviews, you'll hear of Paul Simonon's watch, David Bowie's penis, the Archangel of Crete and the safest way out of Altamont. And like those Crazy Horse tracks, it should last a transportingly long time. Until next month…

JOHN MULVEY, EDITOR

## If the doors of perception were cleansed…

In his review of *Abbey Road*'s The Medley [MOJO 311], Jon Savage mentions "beat poet Royston Ellis", a name not often mentioned in Beatles lore, which is odd for such a seminal figure. In Ray Coleman's John Lennon biography, it says that The Beatles backed Ellis at a reading at the University and later at the Jacaranda. This would have been when Lennon and Sutcliffe were living in the Gambier Terrace flat – the "Beatnik hell of pre-fame Beatle", as the News Of The World put it when they got hold of some photos of the place.

I first came across Royston Ellis in 1962, a book about James Dean titled Rebel. Then in 1964 came Myself For Fame, about "the rise and fall of a pop star". In the book our hero goes walkabout in Liverpool and goes into a coffee bar named "The Panda". Long story short, he meets the drummer of the band that will play there that evening and goes back to his "pad" to meet the rest of the band before playing with them that night. The flat is quite obviously Gambier Terrace.

More to the point, in the late '60s when there were any number of claimants to the crown of "the man (and at least one woman) who turned on the Beatles", John wrote a letter to International Times saying they were all wrong, and that they were getting high even before they went to Hamburg and discovered 'Prellies'. John said that it was Royston Ellis who first showed them how to get high by cracking open a Benzedrex nose inhaler and soaking the cotton wool pad in a glass of Coca-Cola to get the Benzedrine out. Some speed freaks I knew at the time tried it and said it tasted really foul, but the rush was amazing, Man. Don't try this at home today kids, they don't make that stuff no more!

*Dean Smith, via e-mail*

## I came here to talk about my job

Regarding Giles Martin's comments in MOJO 311: am I alone in thinking he appears intent on making self-contradictory statements? He condemns earlier remixing of his favourite Free track ("even as a 13-year-old it annoyed me") but, in his mature years, appears quite content with his mission to dabble with the recorded legacy of his father and The Beatles.

Study this quote and let the implications really sink in: "We had to mix Come Together five times because the original always sounded better." What does that tell you about the entire remixing exercise? The sound engineered by young Martin has now lost any pretense of an accurate relationship to the original masters as authored, heard and signed off by Martin Sr and the Fabs. Surely at this stage the Boy Martin far exceeds his remit. At what point do remastering tweaks become creative production amendments? If we can, on a whim, introduce contemporary technology to the creators of ➢

historical masterpieces, why stop at The Beatles? Let's go the whole hog. Let's colourise Citizen Kane. We can add a cameo part for Chuck Norris and green-screen him into the action along with car chases and explosions. Tag on a blooper reel as outtakes are demonstrably desirable and cherished. I'm sure it's what Orson would have wanted.

*Russell Morris, via e-mail*

## It is strange that you do not remember any of your poetry

Thank you for making an old man very happy with your feature on Tom Waits in MOJO 310. Your description of *Swordfishtrombones* is similar to how my wife describes the majority of his work. She explains it as a Peggy tub (ask your parents, youngsters) filled with rusty metal, pea gravel, and broken glass bottles, pushed down the steps at Whitby Abbey, and hitting every step on the way to the bottom. All 199 of them. I prefer Colin Larkin's last four words in his encyclopedia of popular music: "He has no rival." Long may he, and MOJO continue.

*Tags Taylor, Thurnscoe, South Yorkshire*

## Do you still have my eyeglasses?

Two amends regarding information on Brazilian music in MOJO 311. In All Back To My Place, Sheila Maurice-Grey talks about this "Cuban artist Cassiano". Genival Cassiano dos Santos in fact recorded a very fine and pioneering album, *Cuban Soul*, in 1976, but he was born in the northeast state of Paraíba and is part of the 'Brazilian soul music holy trinity', along with Hyldon and Tim Maia.

In the João Gilberto obituary, David Hutcheon says Desafinado was the first bossa nova song. No, Chega De Saudade was the first, and the song that really changed Brazilian music forever. It came out in August 1958, but Elizeth Cardoso had already released her version on an obscure record where João Gilberto and his acoustic guitar can also be heard.

Desafinado, another huge and influential song, was Gilberto's second 78rpm, and came out in February of 1959. Both songs were included on the *Chega De Saudade* album, one of the top five Brazilian records ever, and probably the most important one.

*Leandro Saueia, owner of probably the only full collection of MOJO in Brazil*

## Why is it that the landscape is moving, but the boat is still?

We returned. Fifty years later. Only the view over the Solent remained unchanged in our memories. The fields had shrunk but the trees had grown. The only music was carried by the wind and the larks. The lanes unpopulated. The fields untented. The fences dismantled. The festival site returned to its original ruminant owners – free at last. Possessed briefly by a noisy harlequin show of passers-by, desperate to belong to that curious decade, before returning to their Monday mornings and an end of something. Nineteen no longer and the party all but over, the Isle Of Wight Festival now a fading memory and our little pilgrimage no more than a colourful interlude at the end of a gaudy summer... Ah but I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now.

*Peter McFarlane, via e-mail*

## Perhaps I could interest you in some beads?

Wow! Terrific new issue [MOJO 311]: Terry O'Neill's Bowie pics; the late Art Neville; Mike Scott interview; Jethro Tull; 50th anniversary of The Beatles' *Abbey Road*; Laura Nyro; Janis Joplin biography; Dylan/Young at Hyde Park; 30th anniversary of The Cult's *Sonic Temple*; et al. Thank you. Keith Cameron's excellent piece on *Sonic Temple* reminded me of Rick Rubin's regrettable production of the band's *Electric*. Thank goodness the band came to their senses and collaborated with producer Bob Rock to make *Sonic Temple*. For me, producer Steve Brown's The Cult/*The Manor Sessions* on Beggars Banquet are the definitive versions of *Electric*'s songs. In my opinion, Rubin is inexplicably revered/wildly overrated. Go figure.

*Marty Lange, Austin, Texas*

## The circle of life has no ending

I was overjoyed to see the *Abbey Road*-themed MOJO 311 spring to life, off the shelf and into my hands at Esbjerg train station in Denmark as I prepared for a 14-hour journey back to Bristol. With regard to the film quotes on the Theories, Rants, Etc section they are from the brilliant 1969 film The Magic Christian starring Parlophone labelmate and all-round genius Peter Sellers as Guy Grand, adoptive father of Youngman Grand Esq, played by Ringo Starr in between sessions for *Abbey Road*.

Further Beatle connections can be found in the song Come And Get It used throughout the film's soundtrack. The song was written by Paul McCartney, who recorded a demo of it during the *Abbey Road* sessions before giving it to Badfinger. Their version, produced by McCartney, appears in the film (McCartney's version was eventually released on The Beatles' *Anthology 3*). During a later sequence of the film you can spot John and Yoko alongside a host of celebrities boarding the Magic Christian luxury liner, inserted by way of stock footage.

*Kilian Lee, Bristol*

## I... smell... beans...

I know you're gonna get a record response to the [MOJO 312] letter headings, but I got it within the first four words of the first one: Quadrophenia – the finest film ever made, which has probably had more multiple viewings by more of your readers than any other. Fantastic issue – never stop.

*Mark Scally, Mod, Edinburgh*


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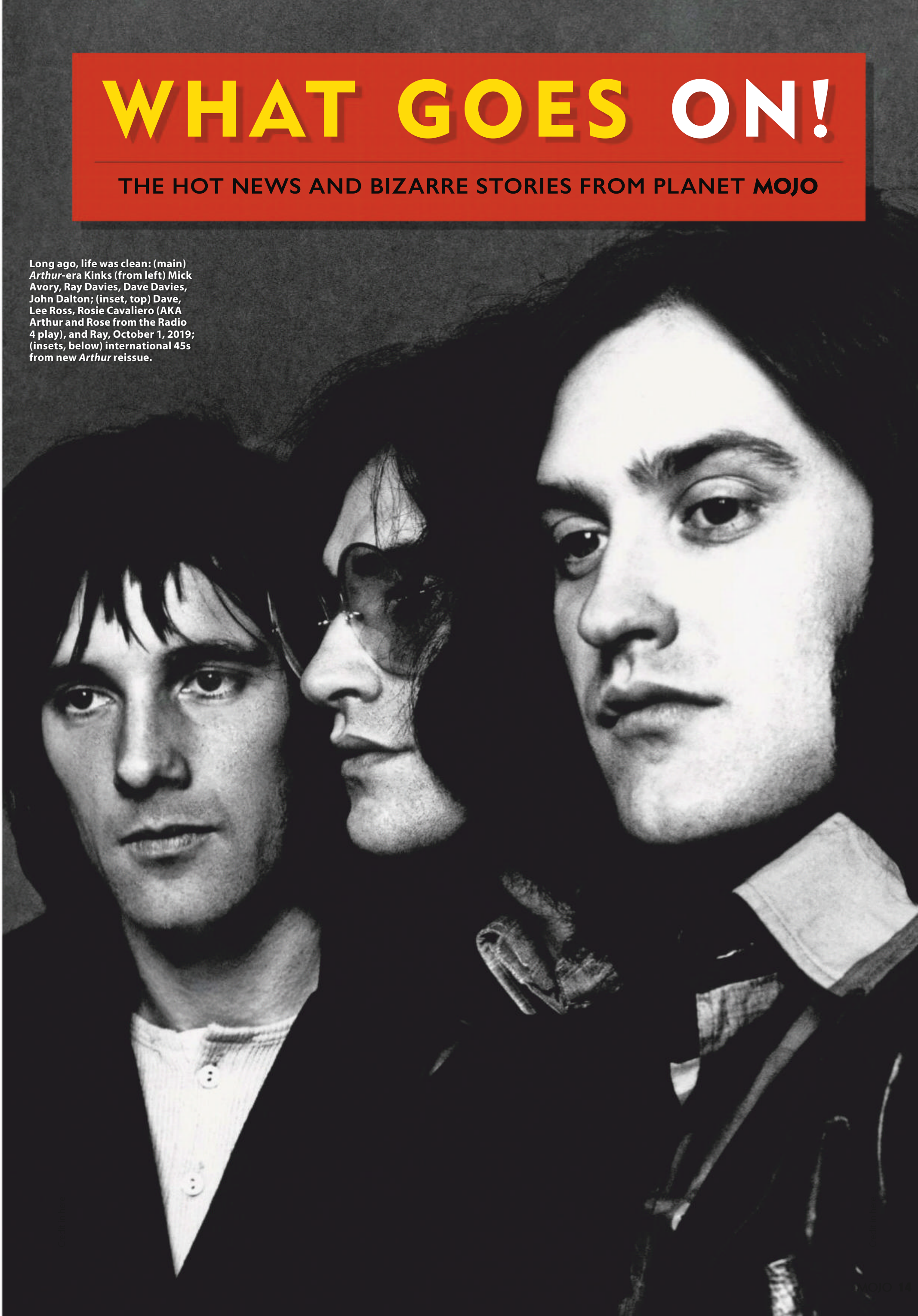
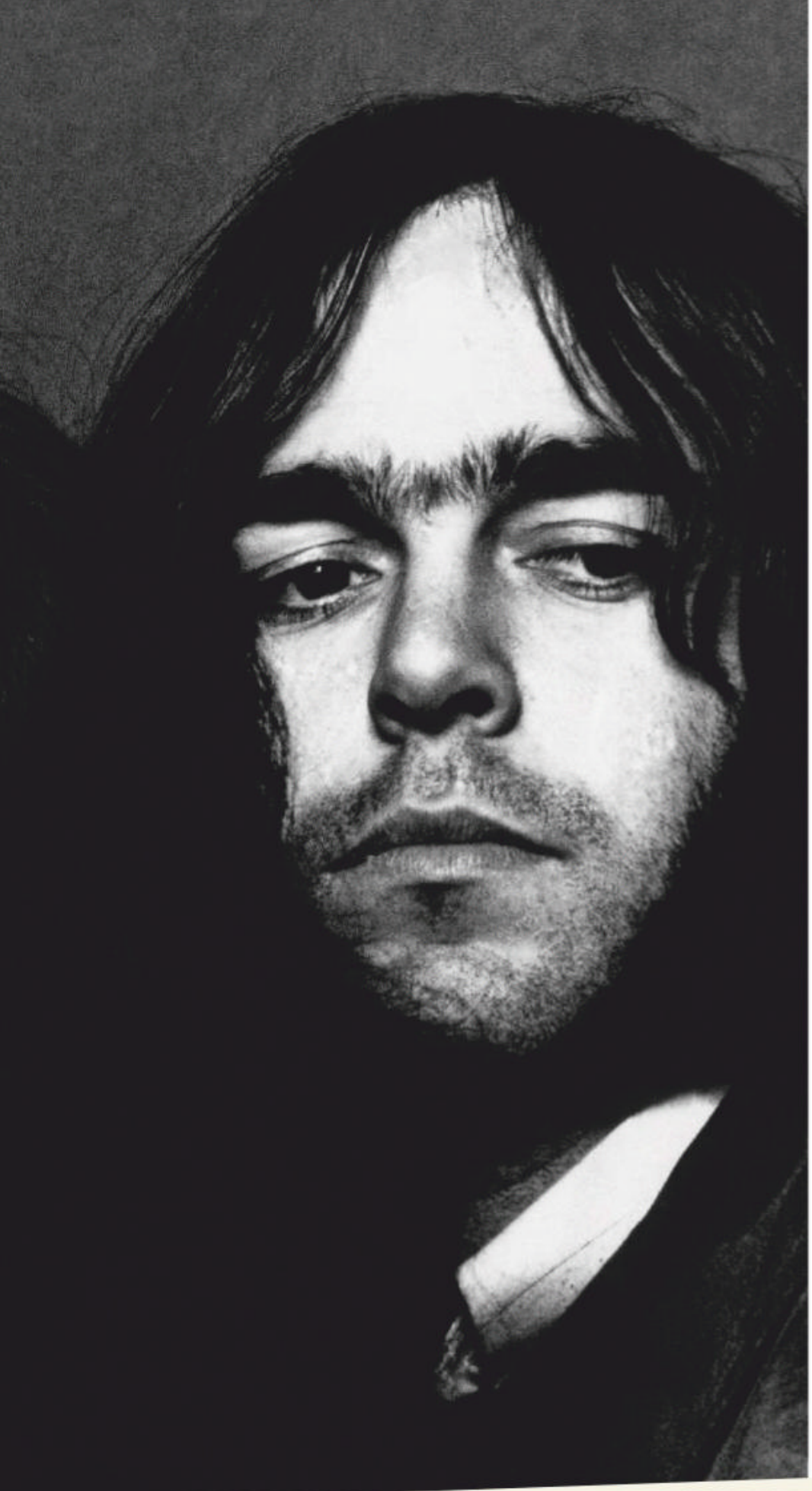


**Long ago, life was clean: (main) *Arthur*-era Kinks (from left) Mick Avory, Ray Davies, Dave Davies, John Dalton; (inset, top) Dave, Lee Ross, Rosie Cavaliero (AKA Arthur and Rose from the Radio 4 play), and Ray, October 1, 2019; (insets, below) international 45s from new *Arthur* reissue.**



# Kink Arthur's Return

## Ray, Dave and Mick get the rounds in for their post-Imperial reissue and its radio play. Plus, more new music talk!

OCTOBER 1, 2019, and on a rainy night in Highgate, north London, inside the Gatehouse theatre pub, The Kinks launched the 50th anniversary edition of their oft-overlooked concept album, *Arthur (Or The Decline And Fall Of The British Empire)*. As Ray Davies, Dave Davies and drummer Mick Avory milled around, noticeably keeping a slight distance from one another, guests were treated to ales and portions of fish and chips served in newspaper pouches.

The follow-up to '68's *The Kinks Are The Village Green Preservation Society*, *Arthur* was originally conceived as a Granada TV play, which never materialised due to the collapse of financial backing. Instead, in October '69, the album stood alone as Ray Davies's most personal work up to that point, documenting the post-war working-class lives of his sister Rosie and her husband, the titular Arthur, and their emigration to Australia.

Upon release, *Arthur* was overshadowed by The Who's similarly conceptual *Tommy*, which had arrived five months earlier. Ray Davies insists to MOJO, though, that he felt no rivalry with his more successful contemporaries. "Tell you the truth, it was a strange year for me," he says. "We'd had *Village Green* and we had to deliver *Arthur* quickly because there was the pressure of doing a TV show, which never happened. But by the time we did *Village Green*, I'd stopped thinking about other bands and what they were doing."

Upstairs in the theatre, there was a performance of Davies's wryly comedic new play centred around *Arthur*: written in the last 18 months, it's set to air on Radio 4 on November 2, and features actors Lee Ross and Rosie Cavaliero as Arthur and Rosie. Interspersing the dialogue are songs from *Arthur* performed by a cappella doo wop group Arthur And The Emigrants, harking back to Ray Davies's teenage love of California's The Four Preps.

"I didn't want to copy The Kinks' music with a band," he explains. "So, I thought having doo wop would be a nice way of doing it and getting the storyline across."

There's an ongoing relevance to *Arthur*, too, with its themes of a working class dreaming of a bygone English empire (best represented by its rousingly propulsive single Victoria) while being ruled over by a government of toffs. "*Toffs*, I like that," Davies laughs. "Well, politics is a toffs' game, isn't it? The working class got treated badly, but they were still loyal to the people who ran it."

Along with punchy 2019 remixes of key *Arthur* tracks Australia and Shangri-La, the expanded reissue also features

> **"Politics is a toffs' game, isn't it?"**
> **RAY DAVIES**

*The Great Lost Dave Davies Album*, a previously-uncompiled solo record which reveals the late-'60s blooming of the guitarist's songwriting skills. "We were on our journey as a band," says Ray. "But Dave was discovering his chops. There's some lovely stuff on that."

This sense of reappraisal and the three band members' presence at the Highgate does, inevitably, raise questions about the current state of The Kinks reunion. "We're definitely thinking about recording," says Ray. "We've always got along badly, but that's part of the charm. I've been sharing some songs with Dave and he's come up with some ideas. In a month, we're going to sit down and see if there's anything worth recording."

*Tom Doyle*

*The 50th anniversary expanded edition of Arthur (Or The Decline And Fall Of The British Empire) is out now on BMG.*

Getty, Tanya Brittain

Eco trippin': (clockwise from left) Sam Lee in the great outdoors; producer Bernard Butler at RAK studios; guest voice Liz Fraser.

# LIZ FRASER AND BERNARD BUTLER MEET FOLK APOSTLE SAM LEE FOR 'OLD WOW'...

"I'D SPENT SO much time in studios and tour buses I'd cut myself off from being feral," says Sam Lee, folk singer, heroic song collector and environmentalist (he co-produced this year's RSPB Top 20 birdsong hit Let Nature Sing). "I went on a journey to the wilds of Scotland in 2014, trying to reconnect with nature. In a moment of despair, on a mountainside, this buzzard just dropped down onto me, with the message… it's all right."

The phrase 'Old Wow' would enter his mind, titling his third album. It was deftly produced by Bernard Butler (Geoff Travis introduced the two in 2012), and the guitarist also plays on four tracks. Remarkably, Elizabeth Fraser, elusive voice of the Cocteau Twins, lends an eldritch vocal to non-religious blessing song The Moon Shines Bright, which interpolates Wild Mountain Thyme.

"When I was doing a solo gig in Sussex I got a phone call from her manager," explains Lee, "saying, 'I work with Elizabeth Fraser, she's on the train from Bristol, will you say hello? She's very shy.' She's been coming to other gigs too. Elizabeth is also very much in love with folk songs, that's what she's been singing a lot of recently. What folk songs provide is a reconnection to a love of singing. You are in service to the music, not to advance one's own career. I think she's aware of that and has found solace, and a new confidence, in it. I said to her, I've got this bit on the album and it needs a woman's voice. It's an ancient Scottish song – you're an ancient Scottish woman – in a spiritual way – and she just said, 'Yes, leave it with me.' When she sent back the recording, I couldn't sleep that night, I was just listening to it over and over again. It's just sublime."

Yet it's just one of many such moments: this strange and haunting album collects subtly reframed and worked ancient songs of nature and the cycles of life, with Lee's clear, pure tones teasing out timeless resonances, particularly in terms of ecology. They don't seem like songs from another age – gypsy song Worthy Wood is a lullaby with rumbling thunder that foresees future ecological catastrophe, while Lancashire death song Soul Cake lists reasons to be cheerful in apocalyptic, medieval hip-hop style, as if stating just what is at stake if consumerism continues to ravage the natural world.

> **"What do these songs mean today?"**
> **SAM LEE**

Lee says he was turned onto singing folk songs around the bonfire at Forest School Camps, though later, he says, "I worshipped Michael Jackson – I met him several times, to get close to the enigma – and then Joni Mitchell, where I discovered heart and poetry and spirit." In his twenties he re-immersed himself in folk music, making it his mission to collect songs from travellers across the British Isles. "I came out the other side with a new understanding – what do these songs mean today? I'm a very practical person, I don't have 'visions'. But I think what I do have is a vision of a landscape that is falling silent, and that terrifies me."

Yet there is also hope in his message to the world. "'Old Wow' is the name I use for that sense of deep beauty and magic that is out there that we'll never be able to name or scientifically measure," he says, "but it's there if you know where to look."

Speaking of which, how about future Liz Fraser collaborations? "I'd love to!" he says. "But I'm almost too scared to ask, for fear of sounding greedy."

*Ian Harrison*

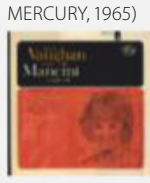
*Old Wow will be released on January 31, 2020 on Cooking Vinyl.*

## GIMME FIVE... INSTRUMENTALS WITH LYRICS TACKED ON

### Kenny Hollywood
**Magic Star**
(DECCA, 1962)

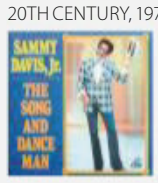
The Tornados' spaced-out instrumental Telstar was huge across the world. Then its composer and producer, Joe Meek, added some words, sung by Welwyn Garden City teen Kenny Plows. Winsome, lovelorn, with a death-disc shiver, it failed to hit.

### Sarah Vaughan
**Peter Gunn**
(FROM *SINGS THE MANCINI SONGBOOK*, MERCURY, 1965)



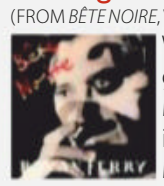
Mancini's 1959 cop show theme later a massive twanger for Duane Eddy gets a brassy, screwball vocal remake, where the voice they called Sassy smoulders about dates with swingers and spousal kiss-offs.

### Sammy Davis, Jr
**You Can Count On Me**
(FROM *THE SONG AND DANCE MAN*, 20TH CENTURY, 1976)



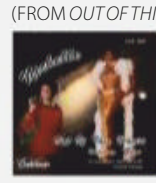
Where Sammy takes the Hawaii 5-0 theme and adds words of eternal fealty ("call me on Devil's Day" (eh?)). Intriguingly, the album also includes his disco'd up vocal version of the Kojak theme (AKA We'll Make It This Time).

### Bryan Ferry
**The Right Stuff**
(FROM *BÊTE NOIRE*, VIRGIN, 1987)



Where Bryan got Johnny Marr's Smiths instrumental Money Changes Everything and added saucy finer-things lounge lizard lyrics. Bongo'd up, Balearic and featuring Johnny himself, its prancing models vid must have delighted Morrissey.

### Nichelle Nichols
**Star Trek**
(FROM *OUT OF THIS WORLD*, 1991)



A hi-energy disco version of the TV show theme imagine those cosplaying Romulans and Klingons frugging with poppers where Lieutenant Uhura riffs on peace and interstellar exploration and promises, alarmingly, "Your Star Trek will never end!"

Getty, Dominick Tyler

# THE WHO

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‘WHO’ THE NEW ALBUM PRE-ORDER NOW

**Branching out: Bill Fay listens in at Snap! Studios; (above) the live room ambience, with guitarist Matt Deighton (centre) and Fay (left).**

# RESURGENT PROG-FOLK PSALMIST BILL FAY TRAVELS DEEPER INTO THE SILENCE.

**FACT SHEET**
**Title:** *Countless Branches*
**Due:** early 2020
**Producer:** Joshua Henry
**Songs:** In Human Hands / Love Will Remain / I Will Remain Here / Filled With Wonder Once Again
**The Buzz:** "The songs aren't written, or found, with an album in mind. I just work on songs, it's second nature, and satisfying."
*Bill Fay*

"IT ALWAYS starts the same way," says Bill Fay, "Joshua [Henry, producer] sends me an e-mail, and it says, 'Hi Bill, I need a break. Can we do another album?'"

Admired by the cognoscenti for his 1970 self-titled debut and 1971's *Time Of The Last Persecution*, the London singer-songwriter was for years a legend of enigmatic, visionary folk, missing in action for decades until he returned with 2012's *Life Is People* and, three years later, *Who Is The Sender?* Work on his new album, *Countless Branches*, began two years ago, when Fay and producer Henry went to Snap! Studios in north London's Finsbury Park ("a great, small analogue place with a lovely atmosphere and good people," says Bill). Regular musicians including Matt Deighton (guitar) and Matt Armstrong (bass), plus early '70s collaborators Ray Russell on guitar and 83-year-old drummer Alan Rushton, would all play on the sessions.

> **"My dad used to say, 'If you feel like you could eat a little more, that's the time to stop.'"**
> **BILL FAY**

Material was drawn, as on the two previous albums, from the home studio demos and works in progress Fay has constantly worked on since the '70s. One Life, for example, has its origin in a piano piece composed three decades ago: other songs are 40 years old.

"I review them every so often, and if you find yourself singing a new vocal top line, you're kind of halfway to finding the complete song," says Fay. "They become completely different, with completely different words."

Despite the presence of 11 different players, the album's 10 concise songs are simply and minimally arranged, with piano, strings and acoustic guitars – only Your Little Face features drums, played by ex-Style Councillor Steve White – framing Fay's aching vocals and piano parts. Initially, there were fuller band productions.

"We didn't plan to end up with a stripped back album," says Bill. "One thing Joshua did like was a solo version of [album track] I Will Remain Here. Then I had a piano and voice version of the song that became Human Hands, and he was knocked out. I actually said humorously, My dad always used to say, If you feel like you could eat a little bit more, that's the time to stop. They all laughed, but Joshua came out and said, 'I am in favour of less is more.' I think we shifted then from playing it by ear, to trying to make sure that each song was more simple and effective."

These settings suit these songs of quiet rapture and melancholy, MOJO ventures, and the artist agrees. "I always feel for the plaintive, and lyrically the themes are fundamental to me. There'll be comment on the worst of the world, and the enormous good. Like One Life – one life is phenomenal, life *is* phenomenal – all the changes every individual goes through… that's not about the bad is it?"

He adds that the earlier, louder group recordings and extra tracks will be featured on a bonus disc, and that the Dead Oceans label has asked him to sign for two more albums. "It'd be nice to keep going in that direction," he says. "It's wonderful to play with people in the studio, and it's wonderful if it touches people."

*Ian Harrison*

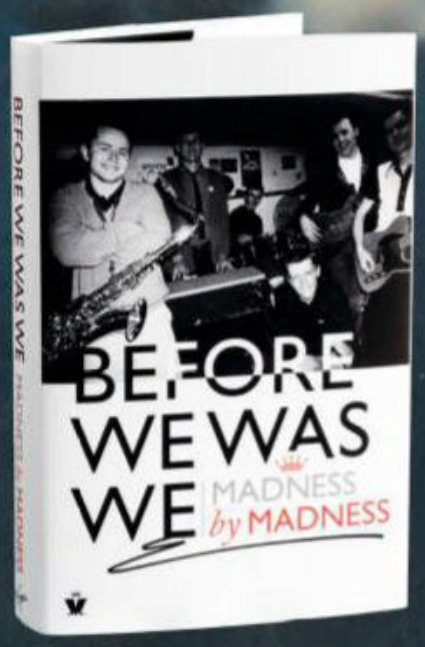
## ALSO WORKING

…having left the set of the new James Bond film because she considered her cameo too short, **GRACE JONES** (right) is back in the studio, promising, "Something wicked this way comes"… **AIR**'s **Nicolas Godin** is preparing a concept piece saluting architectural greats including Le Corbusier, Konstantin Melnikov and John Lautner. Guests include **Alexis Taylor**, **Cola Boyy** and **Kadhja Bonet**: "I took enormous pleasure in getting out my vocoder for four of the tracks," adds Nicolas… **Joey Molland** of **BADFINGER** is recording a new long-player, promising songs that, "harken back to that powerpop/rock sound I began my career with" …those heroes of Brit-funk **LIGHT OF THE WORLD** are crowdfunding a new album with the noble aim to "continue to keep the spirit of Jazz Funk music alive" … last month **GUNS N'ROSES** guitar man **Slash** told metal broadcaster Eddie Trunk, "We're working on new material, which is really exciting." Of the current music business, he mused, "It's like the Wild West out there there is no formula for any of it… but I think that we will ultimately release a full album" …fresh from the triumph of *Norman Fucking Rockwell*, **LANA DEL REY** is already thinking about the follow-up. She told The Times, "I've already written parts of it… it's called *White Hot Forever* …I don't want to take a break" … **DIANA ROSS** (left) will release a new long-player in 2020. **Mark Ronson** is expected to be among the producers…

Getty (2)

# NORTH LONDON THE MID 70s.

*A recalcitrant collective of misfits and outsiders were about to make a name for themselves. Escaping the fringes of criminality, they began to form a band...*




THIS IS THEIR STORY, IN THEIR OWN WORDS.

audible

MADNESS

# PATRICK WATSON

~

*Wave*

OUT NOW

Domino

She likes calling the shots: Angel Olsen has it taped.

# ANGEL OLSEN

## Self-reinventing dramatist of song talks synth-pop, mundaneity and too much information.

ANGEL OLSEN misses her cat. "I wish I could take her on tour with me," the singer-songwriter says sadly, "but you know, she'd pee everywhere and scratch everything up." Rehearsing for her upcoming tour, Olsen is currently in Los Angeles, a long way from her current "nesting place" of Asheville, North Carolina. Her career ignited, however, when she moved from her childhood home of St Louis to Chicago, started making austere folk tapes and caught the ear of Will Oldham, with whom she later performed and recorded. Since 2012's *Half Way Home*, she has evolved through lo-fi country pop (2014's *Burn Your Fire For No Witness*) and silver-wigged girl-group glam (2016's *My Woman*) to the stormy stringed drama of this year's *All Mirrors*, her versatility further underlined by an appearance on Mark Ronson's *Late Night Feelings* album.

**Strings aside, there's a strong '80s synth-pop element to *All Mirrors* – what's the best of that era for you?**

Honestly, I just always like the sound of a droney keyboard. I've always kind of done stuff as a kind of throwback but with my spin on it, and I felt like that was an era I didn't really try out before.

**There's a song on the record called New Love Cassette – do you revere that old technology?**

When I was a kid I would make mix tapes all the time. I feel like I was on that curve between millennial and pre-millennial – I don't know what you would call my era of people, but we would lie on the floor with a group of friends and listen to entire records when they came out. But I also grew up using laptops at school, or really clunky desktop Apple computers.

**Your first EP, 2010's Strange Cacti, was released on cassette – what do you recall about making it?**

I was in a new apartment and it was empty. I had a desk and laptop and I was recording on GarageBand so it was pretty bare bones. That was right before I went on tour with Bonnie 'Prince' Billy. I didn't have any idea about performing live around the country, I just performed live in Chicago. I just put out a tape and I didn't know what was happening with it.

> "I've always done stuff as a throwback but with my spin on it."
> **ANGEL OLSON**

**On Instagram recently you suggested you sometimes miss the parts of your life that aren't music – what in particular?**

When I'm at home I go deep into homeowner world. I run errands and go to the store and grab everything I need so it'll all be there when I'm gone. And I really like doing those mundane things because it gives me a feeling, like, there is a place I am harvesting for. When I have the time to stop harvesting, I can go and I can rest there. It's just nice for me to take a break and not always be so concerned with what my records mean. I hope eventually that I can write other things down that I can't make songs out of because there's a lot in my life that I'd like to write about but I don't think it's appropriate to write a song about.

**Your videos are often very dramatic – have you done much acting?**

I'm interested in it but I like being able to call the shots too, and it's not really part of that job. I guess that kind of keeps me from being eligible! For a while I thought I was going to be an actress or a director. People were like, "You're gonna be an actress" – but I've had people tell me all kind of things and people aren't always right. It's almost like they think I'm waiting for somebody to tell me. Like, "I've been waiting my whole life for this encouragement!" (*laughs*). If I make time for it I could do other things, but right now I'm just Angel Olsen playing music.

**Tell us something you've never told an interviewer before.**

Ha! You've got me there. I feel like I've told journalists way too many things. I've told so many things that I don't remember saying – or things have been twisted enough – that's it's almost like I haven't told a journalist anything.

*Victoria Segal*

*Angel Olsen's All Mirrors is out now on Jagjaguwar.*



### OLSEN'S OVATIONS

**Five Angel favourites.**

1 **The Cars** *Double Life* (CANDY-O, ELEKTRA, 1979)

2 **The Lijadu** *Sisters Come On Home* (HORIZON UNLIMITED, AFRODISIA, 1979)

3 **Nico Heroes** (DRAMA OF EXILE, AURA, 1981)

4 **Enya Only** *Time* (A DAY WITHOUT RAIN, WEA, 2000)

5 **Chris Isaak** *Somebody's Crying* (FOREVER BLUE, REPRISE, 1995)

## LAST NIGHT A RECORD CHANGED MY LIFE

### Taylor Hawkins

Foo Fighter/solo rocker hails The Beatles' *Red* and *Blue* (Apple, 1973)

**"Well you know, it's hard to pick one. I had a couple of records that did that. I was playing the drums aged 10 to Queen's *Live Killers* and Adam & The Ants' *Kings Of The Wild Frontier*, and I *loved* the Jackson 5 when I was younger. Also, *Abbey Road* is my favourite Beatles album, but I love *Help!* too. But, and I know it sounds so stupid and I wanna sound smart and pick The Velvet Underground or something way more cooler, really it's obvious – it's The Beatles' *Red* and *Blue* greatest hits.**

**When John Lennon died in 1980 they put them out. I'd sit listening to them on my little cheap record player, at home in Laguna Beach. I was eight – the *Red* one ['62-66] is the happy stuff, with all that young energy: the greatest fucking garage rock band of all time and they can do anything, like a punk rock band writing really pretty songs, bashing it out, fast and good. They're getting darker towards *Rubber Soul*, they slow down, then you get to the *Blue* one ['67-70] – I couldn't listen to that at first, because they've got the beards and long hair on the cover! They're getting drugged out, and you *know* there's something creepy going on in their heads when they were writing I Am The Walrus and shit. But if you only hear the *Blue* one, you don't know where it came from. To change so drastically in just seven years – the time between two Foo Fighters records…**

**They just did it all. Ringo's such a great drummer, George was like the first Hendrix, the best guitar solos ever written, every one of them was just like a prototype. Any kid wanting their first rock records, they're all you need to know about rock'n'roll right here. Everything that comes after is a pretty good copy – Zeppelin, everyone!"**

***As told to Ian Harrison***

*Tay-lor*

# MADNESS BRING THEIR EARLY-DAYS ORAL HISTORY BEFORE WE WAS WE. BUT WHY NOW?

"IT'S NOT my place to explain what we do collectively," Madness voice Suggs told MOJO three years ago. "But if we did a book there'd almost have to be an explicit agreement that we'd all speak about it completely and utterly honestly… that's why people write their autobiographies when they're old – you can just say what fucking happened, 'cos half the people are dead, the others don't fucking care any more and the rest just like to be mentioned!"

That book is now with us. Before We Was We finds all seven members reflecting on the truths, travails and larks of their formative years, their early days as The Invaders and miracle year 1979, when they became part of the British pop landscape. It's a Hogarthian tableau of a vanished '70s London narrated by seven disparate yet complementary individuals – saxman Lee Thompson is a combination of Max Wall and Fletch from Porridge, for example, while keyboard player Mike Barson is both natural mystic and driving motivator.

"I always thought people writing their memoirs was boring," says Barson. "We tried doing a book years ago with Adrian Thrills, but it got knocked on the head. But now… it was the right place/right time cliché. I dunno if 'maturity's the right word, but you get a certain distance from things and see them with a little more objectivity. The band history is pretty well known, but before the band isn't, so it's new."

It covers roughly the same time-frame as 1981 movie Take It Or Leave It, but has a mature perspective, or as mature as it can be when old pals look back on subjects such as graffiti tagging the landmarks of north London, perfecting glam-skinhead style statements and, in roguish guitarist Chris Foreman's case, finding fireworks under a bed at a Primrose Hill house party and setting them off (in situ) with a lit fag, after he and chums had stolen Mike Barson's car.

"It's the rough and tumble of growing up isn't it?" says Mike. "There's quite a lot of petty criminality involved I suppose. I'd say the book was the whole truth, until someone starts trying to drag me to court, and then I'll say it was all made up."

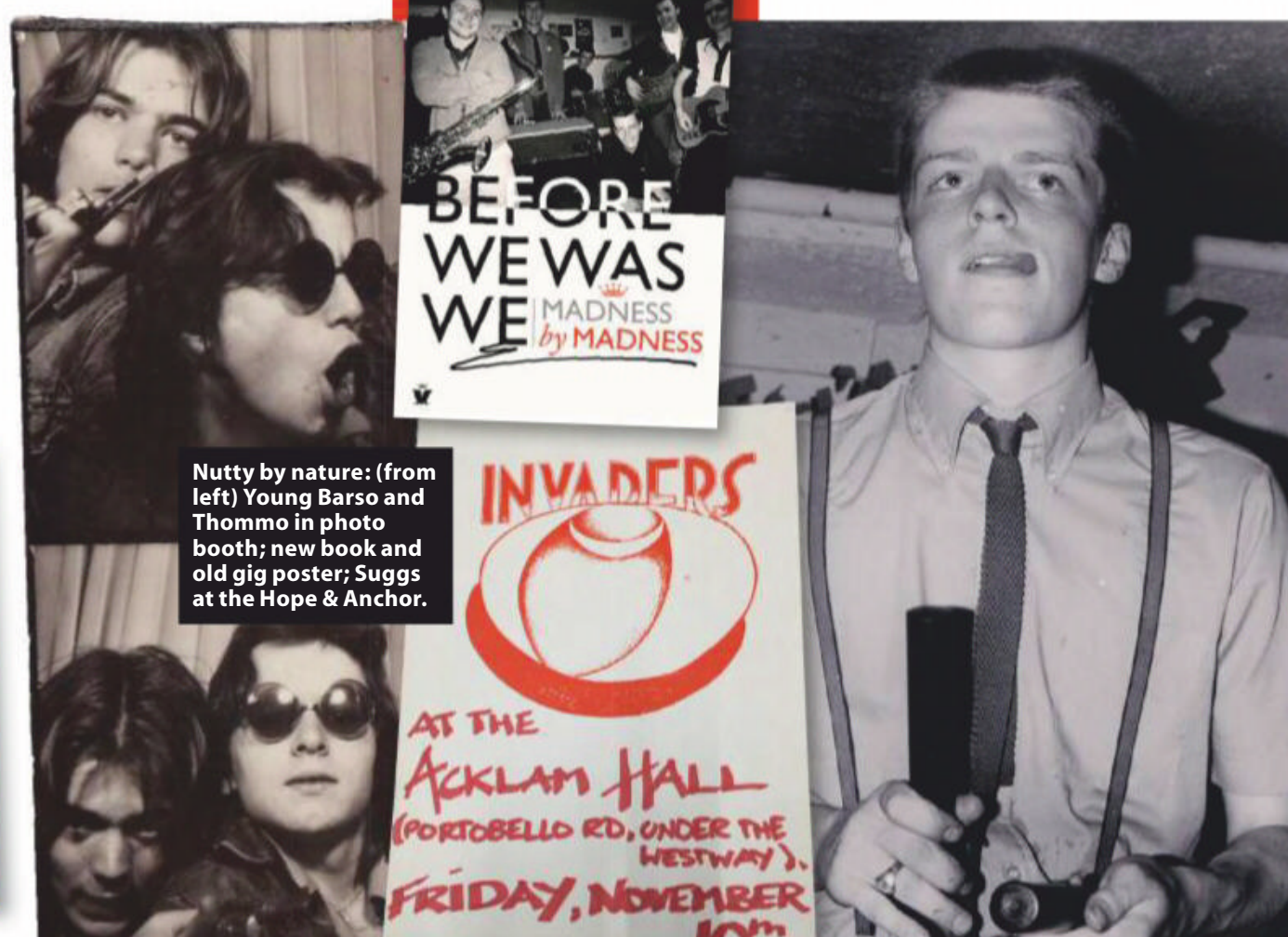
With cameos for pals like 'Minder' John Hasler and roadies Chalky and Toks, the book is not unlike like the photo-heavy inner sleeve of their debut LP *One Step Beyond* coming to life, in all of its "comic malevolence" and loopy energy. Vibesman/songwriter Cathal Smyth's reflections are an essential part of the narrative, but he hasn't appeared with the group since 2014. Will he return? "He's not in the band and I can't foretell the future," says Barson, who's non-committal about a second volume. "But he's in the book, isn't he?"

Band interviews (by MOJO scribe Tom Doyle) and proof-reading were "a painless affair. It was good fun and meaningful – you know yourself a bit better, and everyone else, and it gave me an appreciation for that period in the '70s. It was a good time to be young: you had opportunity, adventure and freedom. We were seven little chancers, nobodies in a bedroom, and we started a band. And we made it, all together."

*Ian Harrison*

*Before We Was We by Madness is published by Virgin Books.*

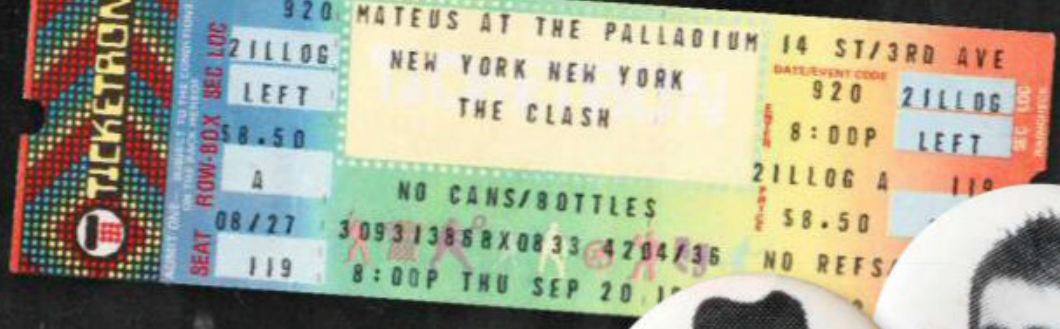
**"There's a lot of petty criminality involved…"**
**MIKE BARSON**

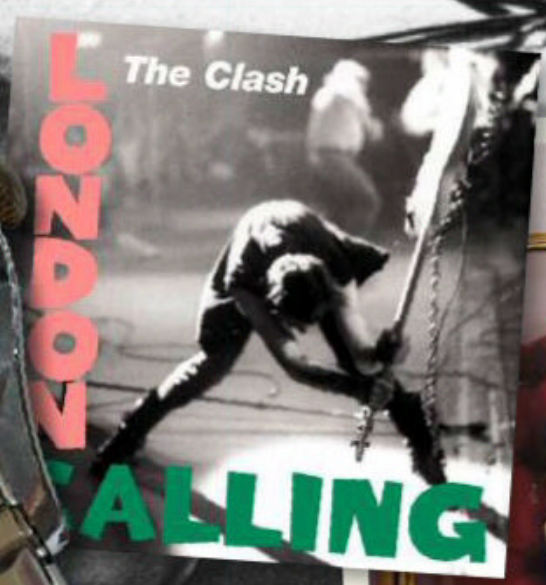


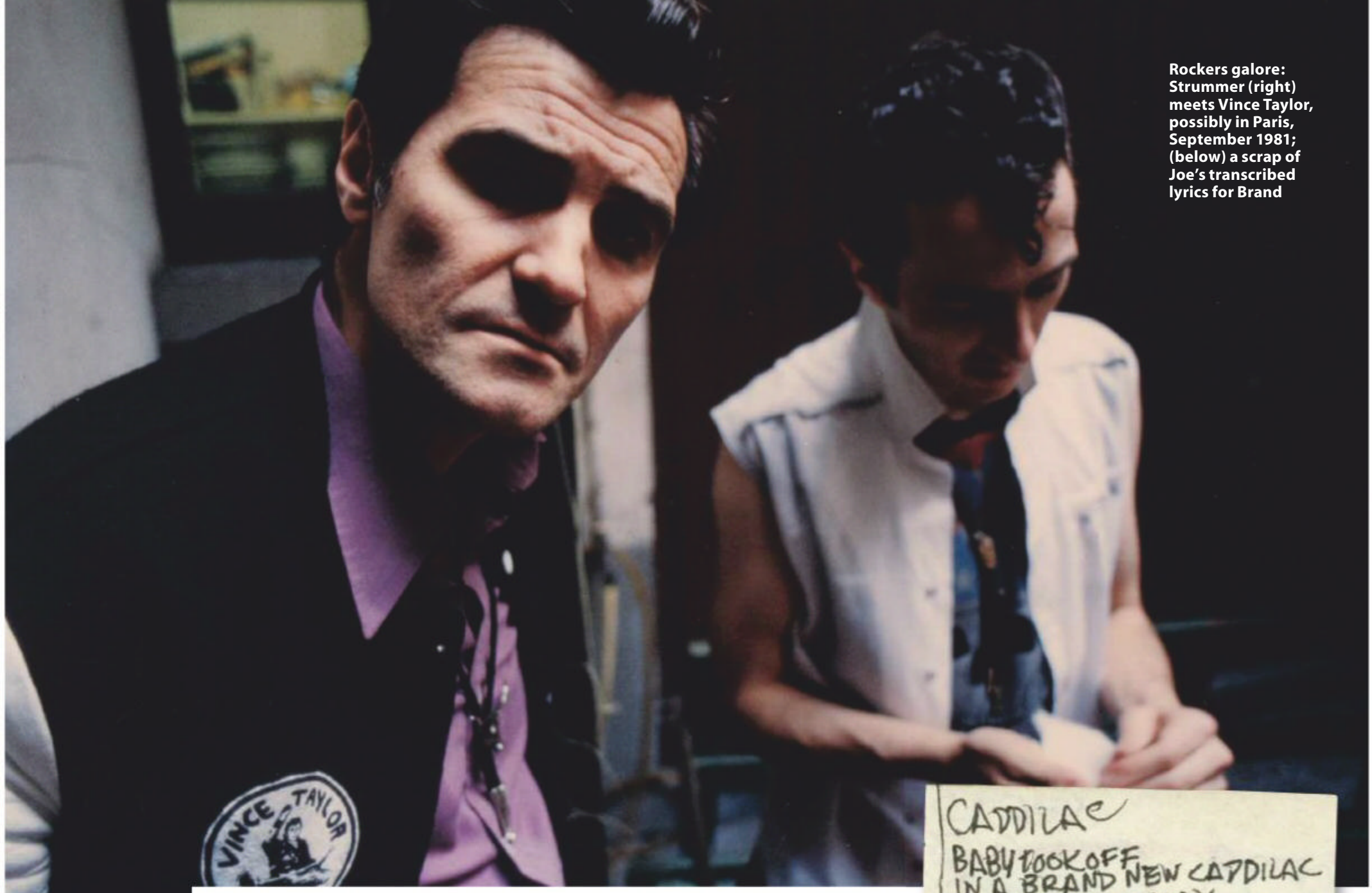

**Nutty by nature: (from left) Young Barso and Thommo in photo booth; new book and old gig poster; Suggs at the Hope & Anchor.**

# WHAT GOES ON!

**The cost of four strings: (clockwise from main) Joe Strummer and Paul Simonon on-stage at New York's Palladium; gig ticket; the broken instrument; LP sleeve; Simonon's defunct watch; plus '79 Clash badges.**








Rockers galore: Strummer (right) meets Vince Taylor, possibly in Paris, September 1981; (below) a scrap of Joe's transcribed lyrics for Brand

# Bass smashing time

A revelatory *London Calling* reissue reveals unseen pics, secret thoughts and the exact moment when Simmo smashed it up…

"IT'S ASTOUNDING how much stuff has survived," says Clash historian Robert Gordon McHarg III. "Everybody did such a great job keeping it all in their archives. The *London Calling* story is such an amazing period for the band and it has actually, like, been told before, but this is a new way of telling it. So hopefully there'll be surprises for everyone."

Surprises galore can be found in the stunning 120-page, hardback scrapbook of documents, photos, lyrics-in-progress, artwork, press cuttings, objects and ephemera McHarg has prepared to accompany a special 40th anniversary reissue of The Clash's mightiest album. Having drawn upon the personal annals of Mick Jones, Paul Simonon, photographer Pennie Smith, on-tour war artist and designer Ray Lowry, journalist Kris Needs, roadie Johnny Green, DJ Barry 'Scratchy' Myers and intimate Robin Banks, new detail, contexts and insights into the creative process are abundant. With each of the album's tracks individually illustrated, the page for Brand New Cadillac, for example, features an extraordinary image of Strummer and rock'n'roll wildman/Ziggy Stardust inspiration Vince Taylor.

"Mick had the photograph, I don't think anyone's ever seen it before," says McHarg, who first saw The Clash in Montreal in 1982. "I think it was taken in France. I couldn't find Joe's full written-out lyrics, but we got the Chiswick reissue of Brand New Cadillac, which is the copy Paul used to have. You use what you have to use, piecing these stories together, being as honest as possible."

Another moment of discovery relates to *London Calling*'s celebrated sleeve image. Few have captured the moment of on-stage auto-destruction with such impact as Smith when she shot Simonon, frustrated that bouncers wouldn't let the crowd dance, breaking his guitar at a gig in New York. McHarg includes the actual watch Simmo was wearing when he busted up his Fender Precision bass, which also broke at the moment of impact – 10.49pm. "Paul gave the watch to Pennie that night because she'd broken her watch strap and he obviously didn't need it any more," says McHarg. "It's one of those things you hear about and go, *What*?! I didn't even know it was there *to* be found… but that's what I mean, you're bound to find things if you look."

As for the date of the act itself, many cite a gig at the New York Palladium on September 21, 1979, while revisionists argue it was actually the night before. A week before speaking to MOJO, McHale looked through some of Ray Lowry's sketchbooks, courtesy of the artist's son Sam. "I found a sketch which says, 'Thursday 20 September New York Palladium, Paul smashes guitar on-stage, Joe hurls ashtray,'" he says. "So there's that too!"

The *London Calling* 40th anniversary celebrations will also include a free exhibition at the Museum Of London, also curated by McHarg with the band's cooperation, which opens on November 15. On December 14 there's a special screening of Don Letts's documentary Westway To The World at BFI Southbank, where the film-maker will also conduct an on-stage discussion with Jones, Simonon and drummer Topper Headon.

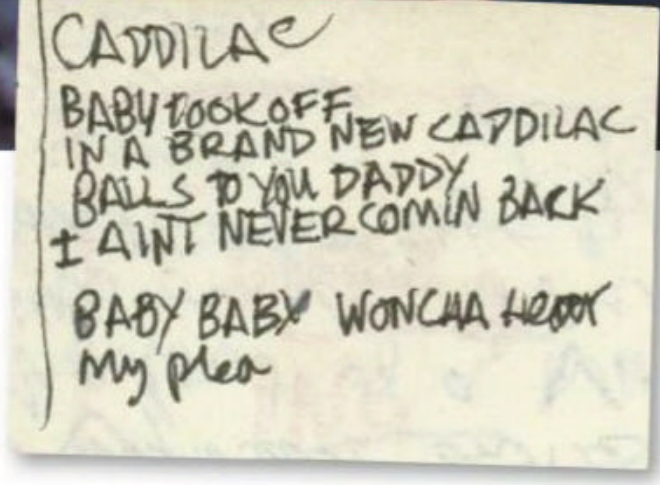
"It's all about trying to tell a story, isn't it?" muses McHarg. "These are little scraps of history we're finding. It all pieces together, that's the fun bit."

*Ian Harrison*

*London Calling is reissued by Sony on November 15 in a variety of tempting formats.*

**"The watch… it's one of those things you hear about and go, *What*?!"**

**ROBERT GORDON McHARG III**




Press Association, ©Clash Archive (5)

# SELF PORTRAIT

Hard-working but lazy: Richard Dawson by Richard Dawson.

# RICHARD DAWSON

"My horse died. I called her Bridget Riley."
**RICHARD DAWSON**

The Northeast balladeer in his own words and by his own hand.

**I'd describe myself as…** basically a very contradictory sort of character. Shy and confident, grumpy and cheerful. I'm a slow thinker. I find it hard to maintain decent levels of cleanliness, both in the house and on my person. I feel awkward in my body but confident in owning my awkwardness. I'm kind of out of it most of the time. I find it hard to keep the chaos at bay, I mainly don't much want to either. I hope I'm compassionate. I'm thoughtless sometimes. I struggle with my eyesight more than I let on. It makes me anxious. I am very loyal. I'm hard-working when it comes to it, but I'm also very lazy.

**Music changed me by…** being always just… life… life-force, I guess! It always resonated, but it really became the whole world when I was 11 or 12. And it just keeps going, you go deeper and deeper, to the heart of things, and then the idea of "you" falls away. I think I'm probably quite old-fashioned or a bit straight in some of my ways of thinking, but music tells me to always be open-minded and generous.

**Away from music I…** don't do too much. I'm trying to fill more and more time with music. I like to read, play Playstation, go bowling, sauna!

**My biggest vices are…** I wonder how many pints of Guinness I've drank in my life? It must be a lot. I suppose it would have to be that. I guess I eat too much take-out as well, but then we have some really good ones nearby. I tell myself I'm supporting the local businesses… supporting them passionately.

Sally Pilkington

**The last time I was embarrassed was…** I'm embarrassed all the time. I'm embarrassed now.

**My formal qualifications are…** not a one.

**The last time I cried was…** watching some Daniel Johnston videos last night. But the last time I had a real proper cry – and this will sound ridiculous – was during [video game] Red Dead Redemption 2 when my horse died. I called her Bridget Riley and I still well up when I think about it. I cried in the street last week when I said farewell to an old friend. I cried watching [2004 Argentine dog-drama] Bombón: El Perro a few nights ago. I cry very easily, and I think it's generally a healthy sign.

**Vinyl, CD or streaming?** Oh… vinyl, I suppose, but you know, whatever floats your boat. I used to be just tapes for years, then CDs for the decade after that, then the last seven or eight years I've been buying vinyl. Well, I say that, but I've hardly been buying anything the last couple of years. It really weighs you down all this *stuff*. I'm thinking of whittling it down, to the bare essentials – Éliane Radigue, Sun Ra, [Finnish experimentalists] Circle, Kate Bush and Daft Punk's *Random Access Memories*… get rid of everything else! And then get rid of them too.

**My most treasured possession is…** we've got some nice things in the house like masks and rugs – mementos from travelling. I guess the only objects I truly care about are the musical instruments, particularly the guitars.

But then they are so much more than just objects. They're mainly space.

**The best book I've read is…** I recently read Drive Your Plough Over The Bones Of The Dead by Olga Tokarczuk and loved it, very smart and sharp with an amazing sense of place. Some other books that left a big impression on me are Starlight by Stella Gibbons – one of the strangest things I've read, creepy and lovely at the same time, and really capturing the feeling of a certain side of London. Growth Of The Soil by Knut Hamsun was magnificent. And two by Michel Faber, I'm not sure I could pick one between them – The Crimson Petal And The White and The Book Of Strange New Things. I would call these books "stately", and incredibly wise and odd. The Sea, The Sea by Iris Murdoch made a big impression. It felt dull, dowdy and stifling.

**Is the glass half-full or half-empty?**

It's both, of course!

**My greatest regret is…** I try not to hold on to regret.

**When we die…** the question is – what happens when we live?

**I would like to be remembered as…** I don't really care. I hope I can live the rest of my life decently and maybe if a few folks remembered me fondly for a while that'd be smashing. And then we'll all be forgotten.

*Richard's new album 2020 is out now on Domino.*

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> "You can give worth to anything."
> **GIORGOS XYLOURIS**

Seriously joyful: Xylouris White, withJim (left) and Giorgos taking in the view.

Manolis Mathioudakis

# XYLOURIS WHITE: THE MISSING LINK BETWEEN THE DIRTY THREE, FUGAZI AND THE ARCHANGEL OF CRETE!

JIM WHITE and Giorgos Xylouris can't remember how or when they met. The 56-year-old Melbourne-born drummer thinks it was at a party. He can't remember where, or what the year was, but does know it was when he was still in Australian noise-rockers Venom P. Stinger, and before he formed The Dirty Three with Warren Ellis.

"But I do remember meeting him," he says, helpfully.

Xylouris's memory is a little better. "It was round 1989," says the 53-year-old Cretan lute player and singer. "In Melbourne. But I don't know how. Maybe through friends?"

However, both recall the impression the other made on them.

"George couldn't speak any English," says White. "And I couldn't speak any Greek. But he wanted to communicate so much."

"I remember his spontaneity," says Xylouris. "We ended up on St Kilda pier and went for a swim, at night. I admired his wit without understanding what he was saying. The whole time, I felt, I have always known this man."

They stayed in touch, and began playing together. Jim chased down the hypnotic joyful records of Xylouris and those of his father, the revered lyre player, Psarantonis, and his uncle, the composer, Nikos Xylouris, a national musical icon known as 'the archangel of Crete'. That music, Jim admits, heavily influenced The Dirty Three. "Because it's very beautiful. I don't speak Greek but I didn't feel like I was listening to anything that I didn't understand. George has dedicated his whole life to this music. They take it seriously, but it's not serious. It's joyful."

The duo released their first album together, *Goats*, in 2014. Produced by Guy Picciotto of Fugazi in his Brooklyn basement, it was the first in a trilogy – followed by *Black Peak* in 2016, and *Mother* in 2018 – that captured the sound of freedom and exploration, of two traditional rhythm instruments engaged in melodic conversation and speaking a language that moved through Greece, the Appalachians, India, the Balkans, North Africa, New York 1980, Harlem, the Highlands, and the Middle East.

"George was brought up to accompany his father on the lyre," says White. "I've never played with anyone quite like that who gives you that freedom. You can jump in the rhythm or you can add propulsion. It's completely freeing."

"I'm always waiting to see what he's going to do next," says Xylouris, "and it is often magical, how he weaves the sticks and dances at the same time."

Recorded at Box Hill institute in Melbourne, the duo's new album, *The Sisypheans*, is, they say, a natural progression from the trilogy, but more interested in the creative power of repetition. Named after the figure in Greek mythology, condemned to forever roll a boulder up a hill in Hell, it is, says White, "about rethinking the myth. Learn to enjoy the repetition, stop and enjoy the views?"

"The Sisyphean message," says Xylouris, "is appreciate and find meaning in what you do, even when there is none. Repetition is discovery every time. Your will to persist is what gives you life. You can give worth to anything. Hard work is satisfying in itself."

*Andrew Male*

*Xylouris White's The Sisypheans is out on Drag City; see review p 91.*

## FACT SHEET

- For fans of The Dirty Three, John Fahey, Jozef van Wissem, Nikos Veliotis
- Everything can have live musical accompaniment in Crete. "Meals, baptisms, weddings, funerals," says White. "George will say, 'Come it's snail time, we'll go eat snails and sing these songs.'"
- Xylouris finds his songs from anywhere, says White, "a poem given to him by the butcher yesterday, or an ancient lyric no one can remember the age of."

## KEY TRACKS

- Tree Song
- Forging
- Daphne

# HARDCORE HERO TURNS POWERPOP AUTEUR – JOIN YOUNG GUV'S TEENAGE FANCLUB

GIVEN HIS name is Young Guv, Ben Cook often finds people assuming he's going to be a SoundCloud rapper, a musical cousin of Lil Pump or Young Thug. That is, however, one musical genre the 35-year-old singer-songwriter has so far swerved in a career that has included playing guitar with Toronto hardcore heroes Fucked Up, creating languid '80s luxe-pop with Yacht Club and Cheap Trickery with The Marvelous Darlings, and writing starry top-level demos for, rumour has it, Taylor Swift and Kelly Clarkson.

Now with his third and fourth albums as Young Guv (*GUV I* appeared in August, *GUV II* in October), the prolific Cook has created music that picks up the Big Star-loving echoes of the '90s: Teenage Fanclub, The Posies, Elliott Smith. He catches not just the jangle and breeze, but the core melancholy, the sense of chasing an absence. "Everybody seems to be going through some things," he sighs on the fuzzy disassociation of Didn't Even Cry, while Song About Feeling Insane is a character study of an artist yearning for stability ("I want an office") despite their facial tattoos.

The songs were written in New York, a city he disliked as a touring musician but which suddenly clicked in a high-summer Brooklyn sublet after a "pretty serious" break-up. "I'd never experienced a New York summer in my life. That was a huge backdrop for me; that was the movie, that was the record." He would read Chekhov for 20 minutes each morning before writing songs all day. "The guy and the guitar vibe – there's something romantic and just classic there," says Cook, discussing his desire to escape the "endless surplus of plugins and synths and computers" and to write "the way I wrote songs when I first had a guitar. I don't want to be nostalgic and emo about it but it's still a feeling that I remember. Sometimes it's hard to feel anything these days with the way things are coming at us. Everything's getting so gentrified and Spotify'y, and things sound just like a Starbucks latte." As the double-shot of *GUV I* and *II* show, though, Cook isn't worried about keeping things tidy: "Anyone who likes Fucked Up would have a really wide taste in music and would understand someone who wants to work outside the genre. I just always feel a specific energy to create and it's always the same feeling even when it's such drastically different sounds. It's all coming from the same place."

*Victoria Segal*

> **"Everything's so gentrified and Spotify'y."**
> YOUNG GUV AKA BEN COOK

Young Guv: stands firm outside the genre.

Getty

### FACT SHEET

- For fans of: Teenage Fanclub, Matthew Sweet, Elliott Smith
- Young Guv is in fact a reference to Manchester City "Firm" the Young Guvnors, a tribute to his City-supporting English relatives.
- Fellow Fucked Up guitarist Mike Haliechuk started using the name for Cook when the band all had "goofy punk-style pseudonyms" for record sleeves.
- *GUV I* and *II* are co-produced with Cook's long-term collaborator Tony Price.

### KEY TRACKS

- Didn't Even Cry
- Song About Feeling Insane
- Try Not To Hang On So Hard

## MOJO PLAYLIST

Hit the deck! It's the months best folk, rave and anti-Trump jazz.

**1 LEONARD COHEN THE GOAL**
A haunting minute of solo piano, Spanish guitars, that unmistakable gravelled voice: Leonard's first posthumous song from the *Thanks For The Dance* album tells us, "the goal falls short of the reach."
**Find it:** *YouTube*

**2 LUCY DACUS DANCING IN THE DARK**
Located, the female in Bruce's hymn to disaffection. Her smooth diction's not like his anguish, but it's still heartful, invigorating.
**Find it:** *streaming services*

**3 DRY CLEANING VIKING HAIR**
Scrabbly post-punk mixes art school humours, tedium and something more. From the Boundary Road Snacks And Drinks EP.
**Find it:** *YouTube*

**4 BONNY LIGHT HORSEMAN BONNY LIGHT HORSEMAN**
Anaïs Mitchell and a gang of National/Bon Iver outriders make spectral capital out of a Napoleonic War-era English folk song.
**Find it:** *streaming services*

**5 JIM JAMES AND TEDDY ABRAMS BACK TO THE END OF THE WORLD**
Louisville droogs team up for a sci-fi orchestral vamp on the Brenda Lee weepy. Funny, poignant, brilliant.
**Find it:** *streaming services*

**6 TODD RUNDGREN AND DONALD FAGEN TIN FOIL HAT**
Given new life when Todd offered it to any Democrat seeking election, a Dan-esque, reflection on the madness of the POTUS.
**Find it:** *YouTube*

**7 AUTOMATIC SIGNAL**
Mechanik Joy Division/ESG hybrid from Kevin Haskins' daughter Lola's band, who support Bauhaus at their November reunion.
**Find it:** *streaming services*

**8 HAPPY MONDAYS THE EGG (MIX)**
From new *The Early EPs* vinyl box, '86 Mundies track still sounds like a time delay in your brain. Excellent new Pete Fowler video starring Martin Hannett and Tony Wilson, too!
**Find it:** *YouTube*

**9 LEE 'SCRATCH' PERRY ENLIGHTENED**
From *Heavy Rain*, dub partner to *Rainford*, this time-stretching bass-blast has Scratch declaring a new musical world government.
**Find it:** *streaming services*

**10 THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS OUT OF CONTROL (21 MINUTES OF MADNESS MIX)**
From the 20th anniversary edition of *Surrender*, this Chems/Bernard Sumner tune of 'avin' it weekenders thumps like crazy.
**Find it:** *streaming services*

# Double Life

**Ric Ocasek**, prime mover of The Cars, left us on September 25. **David Fricke** remembers "a compelling set of contradictions."

"I WAS never in anyone's band – I was always the first member," Ric Ocasek stated one afternoon in 2011, speaking with his signature reserve: in a soft, hypnotising cadence, often on the verge of inaudible but lined with an unmistakable, steely authority. The founding singer-guitarist and ruling songwriter of The Cars, America's biggest hit machine of the new wave era, was recalling his long years of research and design preceding that Boston-born band's live debut on New Year's Eve, 1976 at an Air Force base in New Hampshire. There had been a long parade of ambitious and failed combos: Milkwood, Richard And The Rabbits, Cap'n Swing, to name three, all including loyal singer-bassist Benjamin Orr but formed to Ocasek's strict specifications.

"They always had to do my songs," he noted, a faint smile lighting up his long, gaunt features. "I wasn't going to do anybody else's."

For Ocasek, who was 75 when he died on September 15 in New York City from heart disease, that resolve paid off with The Cars to spectacular multi-platinum effect: the 1978 overnight sensation, *The Cars*, then four straight US Top 10 albums climaxing with the 1984 techno-beat classic, *Heartbeat City* – all with combined sales of more than 17 million copies. Ocasek, Orr, keyboard player Greg Hawkes, lead guitarist Elliot Easton and drummer David Robinson were a perfectly calibrated ride of '60s garage-rock brawn and sleek avant-pop tensions powered by a songbook wired for maximum car-radio impact. Orr's buttery tenor, Hawkes's playful science and Easton's surf-and-rockabilly bite were key factors in the hit singles: the 1978 breakout Just What I Needed; the sardonic bounce of 1979's Let's Go; the eerie sorrow of the *Heartbeat City* ballad Drive, The Cars' biggest 45 in America and a gold record in the UK.

But there were only two hands on the wheel. To Robinson, who joined the band after drumming for Boston punk legends The Modern Lovers and DMZ, The Cars were "always us helping Ric in what he wanted to do." Easton put it this way: songwriting was "Ric's instrument," the guitarist said. In The Cars, Ocasek was "the sun around which the other planets revolve."

And it was Ocasek who decided that the band had run its course after the 1987 disappointment, *Door To Door*, and the dispiriting erosion of his bond with Orr. When the bassist, during the tour for that album, suggested that he write some songs for The Cars, Ocasek turned him down flat. The two friends reconciled shortly before Orr's death from cancer in 2000. "I miss his singing, being thrilled by it," Ocasek admitted during the surviving Cars' brief reunion for 2011's *Move Like This*. But he did not regret breaking up the band. By then, "I know that I didn't care."

**THE LEGACY**

**The album:** *The Cars* (Elektra, 1978)

**The sound:** Here was Ocasek's vision in crisp, explosive detail, bridging the underground and the mainstream in the *Nuggets*-dressed-like-Roxy Music jolt of Just What I Needed, the cheery despair in Best Friend's Girl, and Moving In Stereo's glacial enigma. The Cars' first album was their best, their leader claimed – "the most shocking because you had never heard the band before."

Ocasek was a compelling set of contradictions. As a lyricist, he juggled intimacy and distance in terse, direct rhyme cloaked in noir-ish allusion and mined with wily Beat-poet wordplay. His own singing was a deadpan croon punctuated with a sharp Bryan Ferry-like choke, a striking counterpart to Orr's natural finesse that heightened the emotional fissures and cooled yearning in songs like Touch And Go on 1980's *Panorama* and *Heartbeat City*'s plaintive, pneumatic title finale. Unusually tall and lean for a rock star, with a mantis-like frame, Ocasek dressed as if he was never off-stage, typically in black and gray, with a Mod-futurist flair.

I interviewed Ocasek many times over The Cars' lifetime and after – when he channelled his passion for the studio into solo albums and producing younger disciples including Weezer, Guided By Voices and D Generation – and he was always warm and open in conversation, especially about the process of music and songwriting. Ocasek was often eager to share new work, including his home-recorded demos. (I remember being struck by his original blueprint for Drive, with a drum machine set to bossa nova.) But he could be elusive about his private life and origins, particularly his age. As late as 2011, Ocasek was still reluctant to disclose how old he was, admitting only to being "somewhere around" 62, the number then cited on the internet.

He was actually five years older, born Richard Theodore Otcasek in Baltimore in 1944, the son of a NASA systems analyst who moved the family to Cleveland. Ocasek (he dropped the "t" in the mid-'70s) had a strained, combative relationship with his father. "I got out quick," Ocasek curtly said of home life. He first saw Orr (real name Orzechowski) playing with a local band on a Cleveland TV show in 1966. They were soon cohorts in "a lot of different bands in different cities, with different approaches," as Ocasek put it, finally settling in Boston in the early '70s. "All the work before The Cars," he said, "was just getting to where the songs were good enough."

"There was a uniqueness to the individual members of the band," recalled English producer Roy Thomas Baker, who worked on The Cars' first four albums. But "it needed someone like Ric, who had that powerful thing, to hold it together." Ocasek was also generous with stardom's leverage, producing important records for bands he loved, like Suicide and Bad Brains, between Cars tours and albums.

When Ocasek and I spoke for the last time, in 2017, shortly before The Cars' induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, he assessed the band's genesis, achievement and end with his usual, quiet assurance. "Each Cars record has its own character," Ocasek said, "its own reason for being. We were on a roll, and each album was an effort to be as good as or better than the one before." But, he added, "I didn't want to pound it to death."

Driven man: Ric Ocasek in New York, 1995; (right) on-stage with The Cars, mid-'80s.

> "They always had to do my songs. I wasn't going to do anybody else's."
> **RIC OCASEK**

Getty, MediaPunch/Shutterstock

Desperate Man Blues: Daniel Johnston makes his Austin debut at The Beach nightclub, 1983.




**THE LEGACY**

**The album:** Daniel Johnston *1990* (Shimmy Disc)

**The sound:** Produced by Kramer from Bongwater, and landing between early no-fi and later band recordings, here is pain, screaming about Satan, the inevitability of oblivion and seeing the sadness in everything, with Some Things Last A Long Time a lump-in-throat song supreme. Devil Town, meanwhile, was covered by Nick Cave in tribute. After this, go back to the beginning.

# Strange Boy

Songwriter of pain and catharsis **Daniel Johnston** died on September 11.

"THERE HAVE been a lot of major catastrophes that have happened to me," Daniel Johnston told MOJO in 2009. "But if they hadn't happened I wouldn't be here where I am today, and I've survived and I'm impressed with that… so no regrets."

His was not an easy life. Born in 1961 into a religious family in Sacramento and raised in West Virginia, he suffered from schizophrenia and manic depression. His songs were by turns painful, unguarded, naïve, sinister, comic, despairing, sincere and somehow comforting, and invariably imbued with a melodic and poetic gift that could be deeply moving. Artists including David Bowie, Nick Cave, Tom Waits, and Lana Del Rey were among those who saw the truths inside the anguish.

A serious Beatles fan, from 1980 Johnston recorded a series of wildly primitive keyboards-and-voice cassettes in self-designed sleeves. He first came to notice in the early to mid-'80s when, working in McDonald's in Austin, Texas, he would hand out tapes including *Yip/Jump Music* and *Hi, How Are You*, and tell people he was destined to be famous. Over the years that followed he created his own audio-visual world, populated by such happy-sad cartoon avatars as the Innocent Frog, the hollow-headed Joe and Casper The Friendly Ghost, with his art class contemporary Laurie Allen as muse and the unrequited dream-love of his life. Not without self-knowledge, the 13 albums he made from 1981 to 1991 included such signature songs as True Love Will Find You In The End, Some Things Last A Long Time and Speeding Motorcycle. All combined hope and belief under the worst conditions, as when he was committed to psychiatric hospital after a manic, near fatal episode in a light aircraft with his father in 1990.

**"His songs were painful, naïve, sinister, sincere and somehow comforting."**

When Kurt Cobain wore a *Hi, How Are You* T-shirt in 1992, the wider world began to take notice. Johnston signed with the Atlantic label for 1994's album *Fun*, but the association was short-lived. He would not record another solo album for seven years, but his legend continued to grow. Using the home movies the singer had built up since he was a teen, Jeff Feuerzeig's documentary The Devil And Daniel Johnston laid his life and his struggles painfully bare: at a 2005 screening, Johnston was reunited with Laurie Allen, who he promptly asked to marry him.

An icon of musical outsiderdom, later Johnston activities included playing Matt Groening's All Tomorrow's Parties festival in 2010, 2012's soundtrack/comic book/computer game Space Ducks, and 2015's striking short film Hi, How Are You Daniel Johnston? Co-produced by Lana Del Rey and Mac Miller, it imaginatively portrayed a dialogue between the artist and his 1983 self. "I chose the darker side," Daniel the elder tells his younger incarnation, "but you should go with the light."

Not in good health, he played his last dates in summer 2017, with players including Built To Spill and Jeff Tweedy. The following year, on Johnston's birthday of January 22, Hi, How Are You Day was declared in Austin, seeking to promote a positive discussion of mental health issues.

*Ian Harrison*

Sony Classic/Kobal/Shutterstock

# Robert Hunter

## The Grateful Dead's poet-in-residence

BORN 1941

In the midst of so much psychedelic activity, the lyrics of the Grateful Dead often went unnoticed by casual listeners. To their fans, however, Dead songs were more folk fables than cosmic fantasias; frontier narratives about outlaws and gamblers that brought myth and heft to the band's radical Americana. The chief architect of all this was Robert Hunter, the band's main lyricist. An accomplished musician, Hunter formed a bluegrass duo with Jerry Garcia as early as 1961, but never played live with the Dead. Instead, after LSD tests for the CIA, Scientology, amphetamine addiction and exile in New Mexico, he reconnected with Garcia and became his enduring writing partner, articulating the band's sepia-tinted vision. Hunter also collaborated with Bob Dylan and released 10 solo albums, even as he became more reclusive and obtuse. Tracked down for the 2017 Long Strange Trip documentary series, a reclining Hunter recited the lyrics of Dark Star – "transitive nightfall of diamonds" and all – and challenged the interviewer's bafflement. "What's unclear about that? It says what it means!"

*John Mulvey*

# Larry Wallis

## Hairy and loud

BORN 1949

A frizz-coiffure'd eminence of the UK underground, guitarist, voice, producer and songwriter Larry Wallis played with a remarkable array of groups, roving between hard rock, punk, pub rock and psychedelia. As a teen sold on skiffle, he worked at the Selmer instrument showroom on Charing Cross Road before forming the unrecorded The Entire Sioux Nation in 1968. Short stints followed in Shagrat (with Mick Farren and Steve Peregrine Took), Blodwyn Pig, UFO, the Pink Fairies and, in 1975, the first line-up of Motörhead. In 1977 he linked up with game indie Stiff, producing Wreckless Eric, releasing his solo 45 Police Car and featuring prominently on the Live Stiffs Tour, alongside Ian Dury, Elvis Costello and Nick Lowe. Later activities included writing songs for Dr. Feelgood, playing with Farren and Wayne Kramer in a resurrected Deviants, and the 2001 solo album *Death In The Guitarfternoon*, a seeming aversion to the spotlight ensuring he remained a cult figure.

*Clive Prior*

**Larry Wallis: the volume dealer.**

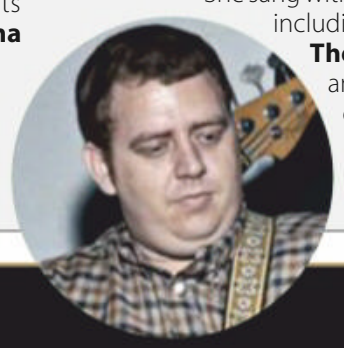
## THEY ALSO SERVED

DRUMMER **MARK 'ROOSTER' COSBY** (below, b.1961) played in the National Youth Jazz Orchestra before becoming Mike Joyce's drum tech in **The Smiths**. He was touring the US with **Siouxsie And The Banshees** when he met **Julian Cope** in 1987, who he joined as percussionist for 1988's *My Nation Underground*. Staying for the mighty 1991-94 trilogy of *Peggy Suicide*, *Jehovahkill* and *Autogeddon*, where he also contributed guitar and saxophone, Cosby left Cope's orbit in the late '90s. He also worked with the **Pixies** and **Sinéad O'Connor**. His bandmate Donald Ross Skinner hailed his "singular and passionate style".

PHOTOGRAPHER AND FILM-MAKER **ROBERT FRANK** (b.1924) published his first book of images, 40 Fotos, in Switzerland in 1946. Moving to America, he started shooting fashion pictorials for Harper's Bazaar. Making his name as a photographer his 1958 national portrait The Americans was hugely influential he would begin working in film in 1959, his first being the Beat poet short Pull My Daisy. In 1972 he photographed the sleeve of **The Rolling Stones**' *Exile On Main St.* and made the notorious and rarely-seen drugs'n'sex tour debauch Cocksucker Blues. Frank's later music-related projects included directing the videos for **New Order**'s single Run 2 and **Patti Smith**'s Summer Cannibals.

PROMOTER **FREDDY BANNISTER** (b.1934) died 40 years to the day that **Led Zeppelin** played the last Knebworth festival, which he promoted. Initially a jazz trombonist, Bannister staged the Bath Festival of Blues in 1969 (headlined by **Fleetwood Mac**), the following year's Bath Festival of Blues & Progressive Music (which featured **Frank Zappa**, **Jefferson Airplane** and **Pink Floyd**, and inspired local farmer **Michael Eavis** to found the Glastonbury Festival) and the seven mega-gigs at Knebworth. He published his memoir There Must Be A Better Way in 2003.

GUITARIST AND PRODUCER **JIMMY JOHNSON** (below, b.1943) played with the **Muscle Shoals** rhythm section. Recording at Rick Hall's Fame Studio in Alabama, he appeared on significant hits including **Aretha Franklin**'s I Never Loved A Man (The Way I Love You). In 1969 the crack session band left Fame to set up their own Muscle Shoals Sound studio in Johnson's home town of Sheffield, Alabama. **Cher** was their first customer, closely followed by **The Rolling Stones**, for whom Johnson engineered Brown Sugar, Wild Horses and You Gotta Move. He also worked on hit records for **Paul Simon**, **Rod Stewart**, **Millie Jackson** and others.



BLUES specialist, guitarist and broadcaster **JULIAN PIPER** (b.1947) discovered his love of the music while at school in Exeter. His group **Junkyard Angels** formed in 1975, releasing two albums. He also wrote for music publications including early editions of MOJO, presented a documentary for BBC Radio 3 entitled Blues On The Bayou (featuring field recordings from his time in Baton Rouge) and in 2016 published a book of the same name.

DUBLIN-born Eurovision singer **SANDIE JONES** (b.1951) sang the Gaelic-language entry Ceol An Ghrá (The Music Of Love) at the 1972 contest in Edinburgh, which was won by Luxembourg's **Vicky Leandros**. The single went to Number 1 in Eire, however, as did the follow-up duet with **Joe O'Toole**, What Do I Do? She sang with showbands including **The Dixies**, **The Royal Earls** and her own outfit.

RAPPER **JIMMY SPICER** (b.1958) enjoyed a short but intense career, cutting such early rap tracks as 1980's Adventures Of Super Rhyme (Rap) (sampled by **Beastie Boys**, **KRS-One**, and **De La Soul**), 1983's Money (Dollar Bill Y'all) (sampled by the **Wu-Tang Clan**, **Kanye West** and **Mary J Blige**), and 1985's **Russell Simmons**-produced This Is It (sampled by **N.W.A** and **DJ Shadow**). He later worked for Simmons's Rush management company and ran a studio in New Jersey.

BLUE COLLAR ROCKER **EDDIE MONEY** (b.Edward Mahoney, 1949) grew up on Long island and first sang with high school band the **Grapes Of Wrath**. In 1968 he moved to California, releasing his platinum-selling self-titled debut in 1977: the following year, his first hit Baby Hold On reached Number 11. Another 10 US Top 30 singles followed, including 1986's **Ronnie Spector**-guesting Top 10 Take Me Home Tonight. He continued to perform and had recently recorded a new album, *Brand New Day*.

GUITARIST **TONY 'WINSTON' FORBES** (above, b.1964) played with Bristol indie band **The Brilliant Corners**. Originally the group's percussionist, he taught himself guitar, developing a tuneful, sharp style. "What also made him different was that he was a black guitarist in a predominantly white scene," said the group in tribute. "When the band reformed to play a handful of gigs some years back everyone was trying to remember their parts but Winston knew every single note."

QUEENS-BORN folklorist, photographer and musician **JOHN COHEN** (b.1932) made an early research trip to Kentucky in 1959 while studying at Yale. The Depression-era songs he recorded there began a vocation for documenting the music of America's rural South. Later, he would record those songs, playing guitar and banjo with fellow **New Lost City Ramblers**, **Mike Seeger** and **Tom Paley**. Cohen's photography, including now-famous portraits of **Bob Dylan** and **Woody Guthrie**, were exhibited at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, while his sound recordings feature prominently in the Smithsonian Folkways collection.

*Clive Prior, Jenny Bulley and Ian Harrison*

Getty (3), Head Heritage

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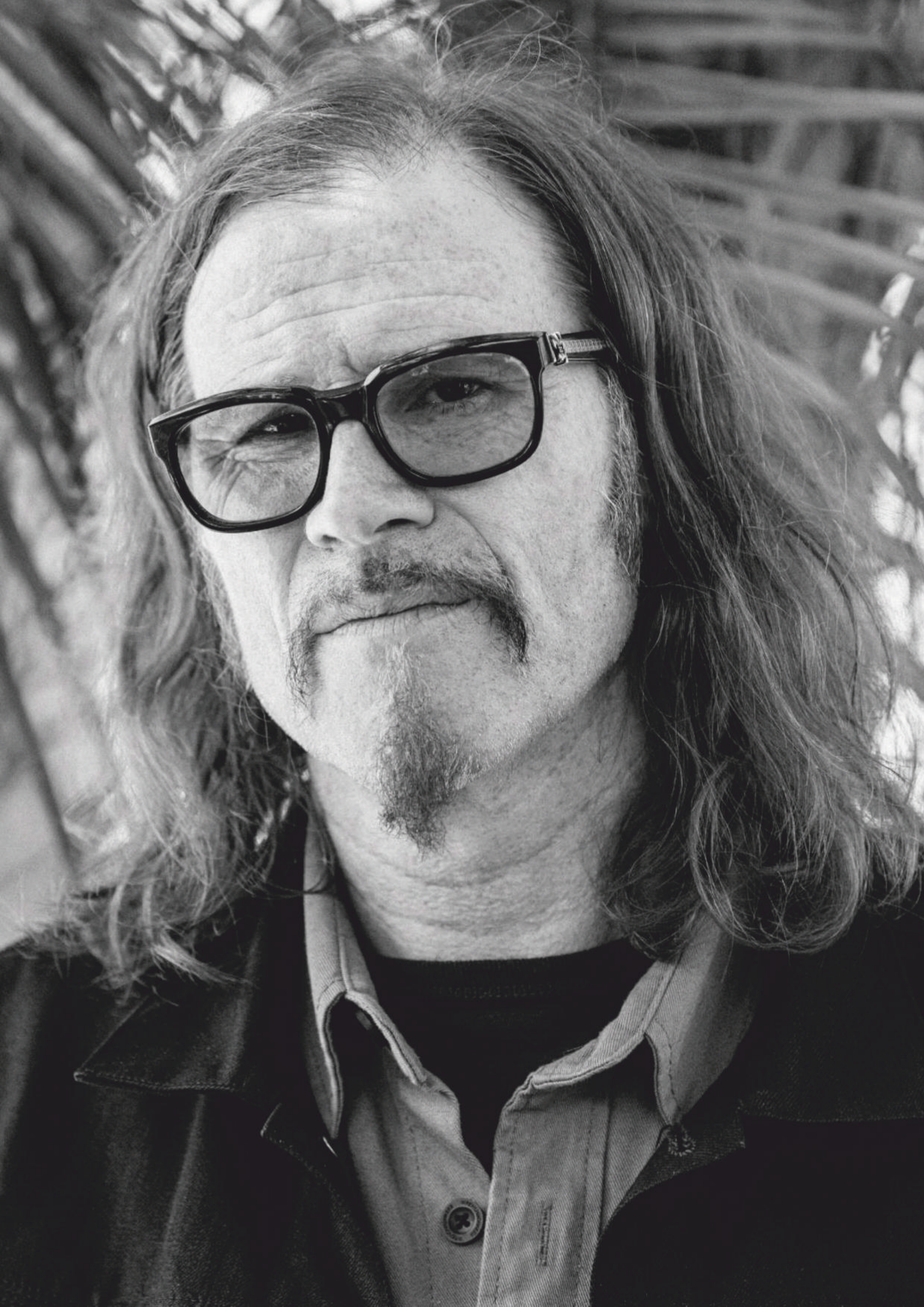


# The **fallen friends**, the **lethal addictions**, the **eight-day coma** that drained him of music – the **Dark Lord** with the **Voice Of Doom** has survived them all. **Stranger still?** His rich late bloom of creativity. **"I always wanted greatness,"** says **Mark Lanegan**.

Interview by **KEITH CAMERON** • Portrait by **RACHAEL WRIGHT**

FROM OUTSIDE, BLACK AS PITCH STUDIO looks anonymous: the garage annex to a 1920s Spanish-style house in the northern Los Angeles satellite of Glendale. The only hint of other-worldly activity is fixed to the side entrance: a large door knocker with a baby demon clamped in the grinning jaws of a bearded horned devil.

Inside sits Mark Lanegan, grinning and bearded, but far from the diabolic figure that cut a punchy, druggy path through '90s grunge as singer in Screaming Trees, then supplied growl and gravitas to Queens Of The Stone Age, after Josh Homme became the Trees' rhythm guitarist in 1996. The room teems with books, paintings, and photographs: of David Bowie, William S. Burroughs, Sid Vicious – resonant subjects for a man whose quest for truth has often co-habited with a taste for oblivion. Amid guitars and vintage ARP and Casio synths, there's a computer station where his longtime producer Alain Johannes will soon plug in. Having just released a new album, *Somebody's Knocking*, Lanegan is burning to finish its successor before embarking on a two-month European tour.

As his wife Shelley brings in mugs of delicious coffee, Lanegan shuts an iPad, on which he's proof-reading his recently completed memoir. While *Somebody's Knocking* finesses a process that began with 2004's *Bubblegum*, subverting the spectral folk melancholia of previous solo records with an edgy electro-rock hybrid, his next album will be different: songs inspired by the book, acoustic templates embellished by guests including Bad Seed Warren Ellis and Portishead's Adrian Utley.

Titled Sing Backwards And Weep, the memoir is remarkable, an unsparing account of a godforsaken journey, from troubled childhood in the eastern Washington farm town of Ellensburg, to Seattle and a squalid life in the trenches of heroin and crack addiction, via a grinding stretch of mid-level major label alternative rock 'stardom'. There are moments of glory – in 1995 Lanegan played two shows supporting Johnny Cash and received the legendary singer's benediction – and gallows humour, but tragedy predominates. Lanegan has suffered the loss of many friends: Nirvana's Kurt Cobain, Alice In Chains' Layne Staley, his first musical hero Jeffrey Lee Pierce. Yet he endures, the harsh lessons embedded within the great American voice that is his hallmark, an instrument endorsed today both by heroes, peers and myriad collaborators in multiple genres, be it techno, trip-hop or drone metal: from Peter Hook to PJ. Harvey, Nick Cave to Pye Corner Audio.

Writing the book provided "zero catharsis," Lanegan says in his quiet, ochre tones, "just opened a Pandora's box of pain." But the result is typical of the resolve that has sustained him even through his lowest lows. "I always wanted greatness," he asserts. "Or at least something I could fucking live with."

**You co-wrote Queens Of The Stone Age's biggest hit, No One Knows, and Screaming** ➢

## WE'RE NOT WORTHY

### Depeche's **Dave Gahan** on a walker of the walk.

"Not only has Mark got this incredible voice, but he has a *presence* about him – that's rarer. He can make a movie out of a song. I covered Low off his album *Field Songs* – I felt I'd lived that story. There's a line: 'If you ever been skeleton low…' It's a great phrase. There's a truth in all his songs. He's the real deal."

Rachael Wright, Steve Gullick

**Trees only became as successful as they were once you began writing the lyrics. Yet Mark Lanegan the solo artist is far more popular in Europe than his homeland.**

None of that stuff translates into your own audience. It's like the '90s theory: you open for Bon Jovi and you're going to get all their fans. It just doesn't work like that! I never considered what I did to be for everybody. I've always felt blessed to be still making records. And now in the UK and Europe, they're my most popular records. They chart. There are people there who don't even know about the Screaming Trees. I had to spend years not acknowledging any of that. Because had I answered every question and been interviewed for every book and made a comment on every anniversary, it would give the impression that basically I was a failed grunge singer. I had to forge a different sort of future for myself.

**Was music initially a vehicle to escape your dire circumstances at home?**

Literally that was it. I was trying to make money to go work in my cousin's restaurant in Las Vegas (*laughs*). I had joined the National Guard at 15, because you could back then if you got your parents' OK. But there was a paper test. I was no student or scholar, and I'd left page after page blank. When I found out all I qualified for was the lowest rung on the totem pole, the guys who jump out of planes, the guys with the least amount of life expectancy, I begged my dad to rescind his OK. And he gladly did, because he had been in the army and strongly warned me against it. Then I was working at a gas station and a truck pulled up. I see there's something in there, very large, and moving around. I realised it's a fucking gigantic cat. I go, "Dude, is that a tiger in the back of your car?" And he said, "No, it's a lion." What the hell?! He said, "The circus is coming to town." I said, "Are you hiring?" I got hired on the spot. Within a day, I got fired because he asked me to get a "regular haircut" and I wouldn't. My long hair was a statement of rebellion in Ellensburg only because it was such a fucking redneck town.

**So you joined Screaming Trees only after you'd tried joining the army and the circus?**

That's right. I didn't feel *any* affinity with the music we were making. But after seven years of listening to punk rock in solitude, they were the first guys I met that knew about these same bands as me. I didn't know Lee Conner, he was several years older, but I remembered Van Conner because when I was in first grade this kid was laying in a wading pool and he waved at me. We never had a conversation until we're both in detention hall when I was a senior at high school, and he had a tiny U2 button on his shirt. Something that indicated he had a clue about this music I liked. He borrowed a bunch of my records, stuff he hadn't heard, like Hüsker Dü. As I graduated and he was still in high school, I became his weed dealer, he would stop by my house and listen to records. Eventually I quit drinking and doing drugs, then ran into him and said, "I'm just trying to make some money to get the *fuck* out of this town." He's like, "My dad said we need to hire somebody to repossess TV sets – you'd be perfect." So I jumped on that. The Conners got me out of town, but not by my commissions for taking back people's TVs!

**On the band's first five albums you sang lyrics written by the guitarist – typically, a problematic arrangement.**

The Trees were inherently flawed. They had no work ethic, except Lee Conner, who obsessively cranked out three or four completed songs, with lyrics, every day. He was a machine, continuously rehashing the same thing, that phony psychedelia that raised its head in the '80s. All his lyrics were about acid tripping and smoking weed. The irony is, he never once in his life smoked weed or dropped acid. That was *my* experience, but I had no connection to the way he depicted it: smiling cats, purple rainbows… I loved Joy Division, The Gun Club, The Birthday Party – shit with balls. And here I am singing this fucking crap. It was really disheartening. But I just wanted to get on the road. I allowed myself the indignity of singing these songs because it gave me a life I had no other access to.

**When did you realise you had a voice?**

Not until I made my first solo record [*The Winding Sheet*, 1990]. Until then, I was singing songs by Lee Conner and he had a substantially higher range. We weren't savvy enough to transpose keys, put it in the natural spot for me. So I was always either singing way above my station, which gave me a headache every night, or I learned how to sing an octave down. That's really where my low voice came from. Somebody once told me my true voice was actually tenor, but I forced my voice into baritone territory. I was a very slow learner. It was all public. I was not a good singer. Then I started to write songs in my own range about things that were personal to me. With the Trees, it wasn't really until *Sweet Oblivion* [1992] that I realised I had a powerful rock voice, because now I was writing those lyrics and those parts in my voice. And dude, I realised then that I could blow the fucking walls out.

**What were you aiming for with your early solo records?**

The first one I started two months after I learned my first chord. Let's just say it's flawed. It was at the very outer limit of my talent. I had my friend Mike Johnson, who could actually play guitar, put in intros, middle sections and outros, then we recorded it in three days. By the time I was making the second one [*Whiskey For The Holy Ghost*, 1994], I was determined to make something great, even though I still was like a cave man trying to make fire. I really wanted something like *Starsailor* or *Trout Mask*

## A LIFE IN PICTURES

**The dark stuff:** Lanegan under the lens.

**1** Teenage kicks: the young Mark Lanegan.

**2** Dogs of war: Screaming Trees backstage at Fulham Greyhound, February 21, 1990, (from left) Mark Lanegan, Van Conner, Sean Hollister, Gary Lee Conner.

**3** Field music: the Trees' final touring line-up, 1996 (from left) Lee Conner, Josh Homme, Lanegan, Van Conner, Barrett Martin.

**4** Blood brothers: Lanegan and Greg Dulli, AKA The Gutter Twins, ready to plumb the depths, 2008.

**5** Sunday morning coming down: Isobel Campbell takes Mark for a walk in the country, 2008.

**6** Deaf school: Queens Of The Stone Age, 2002 (from left) Dave Grohl, Troy Van Leeuwen, Nick Oliveri, Josh Homme, Mark Lanegan.

**7** I am the wolf: Lanegan on-stage in Oslo, November 14, 2017.

**8** Lanegan with (from left) Laetitia Sadier, John Cale and Anja Plaschg at A Life Along The Borderline: Tribute To Nico, Rome, April 11, 2010.

**9** Mark in the clear, 2004, circa *Bubblegum*: "I had to forge a different sort of future for myself.".

Avalon Red (2), Getty (3), Alamy, Shutterstock/Andy Paradise

*Replica*. Unreachable paradigms. But it had seemed so meaningless until that point. I had quit the Trees already, thinking, "I'm making more money solo because I don't have to split it with you guys or have the record company put us up in a New York hotel for three months" – the whole rigmarole of '90s rock. Lee Conner threw a fit and tore his own apartment apart as I walked out. They called me a couple weeks later: "If you do this record with us, we will write as a team and the lyrics will be in your hands." By that time, I was equipped for it. Over the course of the next few years we recorded *Sweet Oblivion* and we toured – a lot.

**During this period you became addicted to heroin, about which your book is brutally frank. What was it about the world, or yourself, that you were trying to erase?**

I come from a long line of people with problems: convicts and moonshiners, dirt-poor miners. My dad's older brother, Virgil Lanegan, was a hobo, an alcoholic, who rode the rails all around the United States, who died at age 44 in an old folks home with no legs, because one day he fell off the train and got both his legs cut off. I was always in trouble. I was on probation from 11 years old until 18. When I was 18, I got a prison sentence immediately. I distinctly remember my dad sitting me down at age 14: "Every time I look at you, I see your uncle Virgil, and he had nothing but turmoil and strife his entire life. I just want to tell you, you got a lot of hard lessons to learn and you're going to learn them a very painful way." (*Laughs*) And he was absolutely correct. I was, like I said, an extremely slow learner. Always thought I knew better than anybody. I came out of the box that way, looking to get over. I'm sure not having any parental guidance had something to do with it. I had one parent who I did my best to avoid, and luckily didn't have to live with her past the age of 12. My father, God bless him, he was an absentee while he was married and also while he was my parent afterwards. I basically raised myself, and when you're me and you're raising yourself, (*laughs*) you have a terrible parent, dude. One that indulges every one of your darkest thoughts or obsessions. And that's all I did.

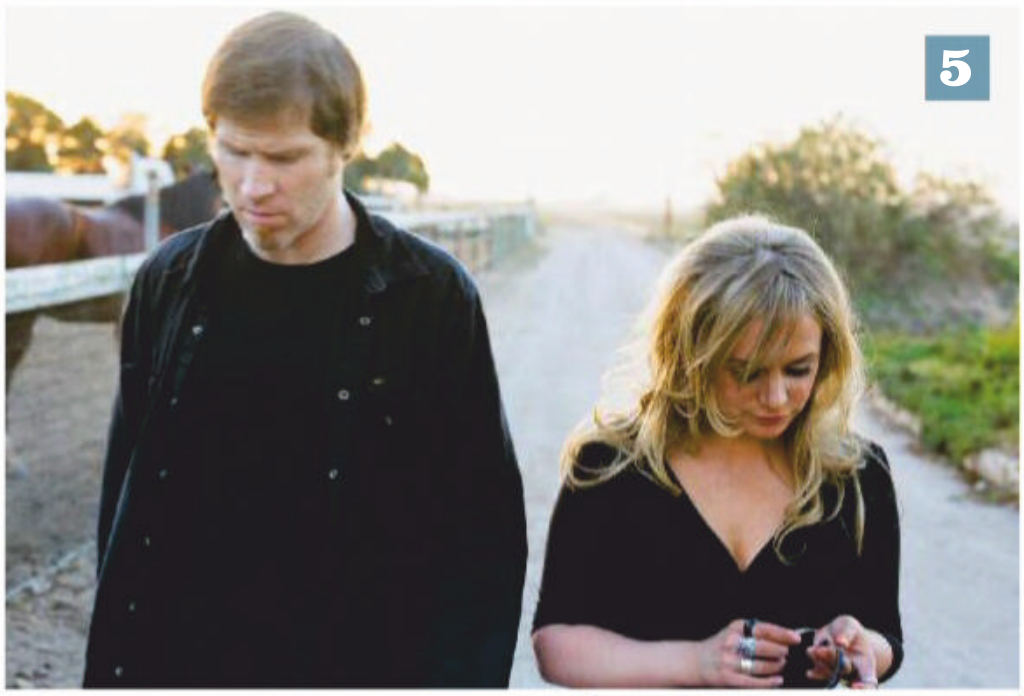
**By the end of the '90s, you've kicked drugs, moved to Los Angeles, and the Trees regroup one last time – was there a kinship even to the end?**

> "I come from a **long line** of people with problems: **convicts** and **moonshiners**, **dirt-poor miners**."

We always had each other's back. But Van Conner was my only friend in the band until Josh Homme joined, and by *that* time, Van and all of them blamed me – rightly so – for missing that window of opportunity between *Sweet Oblivion* and *Dust* [1996], when something could have happened but my addiction made it impossible. That, plus my obsession with making my own record, combined to give the Trees the short end of the stick. But coming back to the Trees after getting clean, and attempting to do some demos because I felt I owed them, I realised I could not be that guy to hold the reins any more. I had to sit there and watch as [drummer] Barrett Martin took the guitar out of Gary Lee Conner's hands and started showing him how to play. It was a shitshow. I realised right then part of the reason I was loaded the whole time was just to survive the mental beatdown of being in that band. Every one of us was a complete weirdo. Me being the most egregious example, but all in such different ways as to completely isolate each one of us. It wasn't until Josh Homme came along that I met my match mentally. By that time, really I didn't give a damn. But he knew I loved music and that I also was deeply unhappy. We were equals, even though he was 24, I was 33, even though I was a degenerate drug addict and he was a clean-cut kid. He became my spirit animal for those years.

**You survived drug addiction when so many of your friends did not. Upon hearing of Layne Staley's death in 2002, you wrote a beautiful song called Way To Tomorrow. How is it you found the way when he, and others, couldn't?**

Pure luck, dude. I have a hardy constitution. A lot of my friends who didn't make it were of slighter build. Of course, there's plenty humongous man mountains who die of drug overdoses! Also, I have long periods in my life where I didn't do drugs. That's the main reason I'm here. I've had five years twice, I had 11 years. Countless other stretches of less time. But I've been clean more of my life now than I have been loaded. Again, just pure luck. Dylan Carlson, my oldest friend, he's still here, he's certainly not a big guy, and he certainly has had major health problems due to his past. Yet he thrives and still makes music considered genius, by me and a lot of other people.
I always like to say I was there when drone metal was invented because it was in my fucking basement. It used to move my bed on the third floor across the room! I love Dylan so much. I wrote a song on this record I'm ➢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# "I get up **every day** and **I write music.**I'm **compelled** to do that. **I love it.**"

working on right now about Dylan. Some of the funniest stuff that anybody's ever said in the midst of the darkest times was by him.

**Have you written a song about Kurt Cobain?**

I have. It was on *Bubblegum*. The first song.

**When You're Number Isn't Up, with its opening lyric, "Did they call for the Night Porter" – which, as you note in the book, was Kurt's nickname for you…**

That song was about serious regret and survivor's guilt. That didn't, of course, show up until years later, but it shows up when it shows up, and he shows up all the time. There's some stuff in the book that I would rather not have anybody ever know, like the way I behaved on the day he died, the way I wilfully ignored his phone calls – he never would have done that to me.

**You can't know that.**

Well, people always say he would've done it anyway. And there's no truth to that, because I myself have been at that place a couple of times, and something intervened. I saw something, and I thought, "Thank God I did not do what I was thinking about doing because I would have never seen this." I know lots of other people that have been to that edge and somehow got past it. Somebody intervened. Who knows? Had I fucking picked up the phone one of those three times, had I gone over… Who knows? But I know it's something I'll never ever get over. And I do pick up the phone now, no matter what time, day or night, whenever somebody is calling. Because that's a lesson you don't need to learn twice. Especially since, from the moment I saw him, I clearly saw the potential for genius.

**You officially joined Queens Of The Stone Age for *Songs For The Deaf*. Must have been a rewarding time for you?**

Very rewarding. It became *too* rewarding. Let's put it this way, I was getting paid the same as everybody else and doing a tiny fraction of the work… At first I was just a guest, so that was cool. It was a thrill to sing on *Rated R* [2000] because I recognised the brilliance of what Josh was doing. It showed up at a good time for me, because I was clean. Besides the live thing, I was helping Josh write lyrics and songs. That was really my role, to be his right-hand man in that department for those years, from *…Deaf* through *Lullabies* [*To Paralyze*, 2005].

**Why did you leave? Josh said it was because if you didn't, you were going to die.**

My addiction has come and gone many times over the course of my life, and it bloomed at a time when it was convenient to clean house because he was also cleaning house with Nick [Oliveri, QOTSA's loose cannon bassist]. Then as soon as he cleaned house with both of us, he rehired me (*laughs*). What ended up happening was, I had a particularly psychotic episode happen, via drugs. Then, as I was getting ready to go back to the band, I had a near death experience. I was in a coma for eight days.

The nine lives club: Mark Lanegan at home with feline friends, Glendale, California, September 11, 2019.

Rachael Wright

That's what he meant by 'he was going to die'. At that point, yeah, I was close to dying, but it had nothing to do with the band. But it was also the end of my tenure, as an official member. I still continued to do stuff with Josh on his records: go through lyrics with him. For a guy who is so talented and sure of himself, he does look to guys like me and Al [Johannes] for a sounding board of what is cool and isn't. I continued to do that until the record that went to Number 1 [...*Like Clockwork*, 2013] and then I was no longer needed in that capacity (*laughs*).

**Well, I'm sure you'll be back.**

We had lunch two weeks ago! That's enough for me. But really, it was too easy. I had to do my own thing. For eight years I didn't do anything except my guest spots with the Queens, then I did them with Greg Dulli in The Twilight Singers. Then I made three records with Isobel Campbell, where she wrote all the songs. I did two Soulsavers records and that was maybe half a record's worth of lyrics per record. Then I didn't have anything going on and I got an offer to make a song for a video game, and I went back to Al. Once we finished that song, we decided to keep going. And that became *Blues Funeral*. Which was the easiest and most rewarding record I've ever made, because we started with nothing and just went for it. We thought it was great and the world thought it was great. I couldn't believe that we sold so many records at this late stage in the game, in 2012.

**Did you wish you'd made one sooner?**

No, because it wouldn't have been the same. I wasn't ready to. After the coma, music had drained out of me, completely. I couldn't listen to music. Forget about singing or writing any. I thought, "Is this the way my life is going to be? OK, I'd better find a new job." I became a scenic painter on television sets, painting, sanding, building shit. And I enjoyed it. Mindless work, but every day was different. Eventually Greg Dulli talked me into going out on the road with him as a guest. Greg's a very close friend and very persuasive. But I still was just going through the motions. It took a long time to come back. I thought it would never, but it came back big-time with *Blues Funeral* – the enjoyment, the inspiration, everything.

**Was your love of electronic music always there, but dared not speak its name?**

I'm able to do it now. I started listening to that music in the '80s. New Order and Joy Division – that was it for me. *Closer* actually saved my life, because I was so fucking down when I heard it. It got stuck in my cassette player in my car in the wintertime, and wintertime in eastern Washington is very bleak: the fog sits in this valley, dark, and it's cold as fuck. I was driving around with this cassette stuck in my car and for the first time it was music that was completely mirroring how I felt. It gave me such comfort. Some people think that record is so depressing, and obviously he did what he did after it was made, but I've had a lot of people that were very happy who did that same thing. But I do know this: that record did the opposite of making me suicidal. It made me non-suicidal.

**Seattle was the scene of much trouble in your life. How do you feel about it now?**

Well, for a long time, whenever I went back I could not be in any part of town that didn't spark some bad memory. But now? I don't even know how to get around. It's changed a lot and I only go back every one or two years, to play a show. I'm really glad that the Showbox, my favourite place in the entire world to play, got saved from closure. I'm the reason they have dressing rooms in that place. There used to just be an open backstage area. But I was like, "Unless there's a place for me to smoke crack, I'm not fucking playing." At first they actually put a *tent* back there and had a guy stand at the doorway, and I just sat on a chair smoking crack right until I played. Then that tent eventually became the backstage rooms. I love telling that story, because it's true! There was a period of time when I couldn't go 10 minutes without smoking crack. Oh my God. Smoked it on airplanes, smoked it in the Heathrow smoking area. I was a perfectly functional heroin addict for years, but crack was a totally different beast. I don't miss Seattle. Seattle's in my fucking bones and I will always think of it as home. But like I said to Tony Bourdain, it's the home I don't live in any more.

**What has 30 years' songwriting taught you?**

It's taught me that I am able to learn. Also, that you don't have to get shittier as you get older. The complexity of what I do now is so many miles from where I began. I just know I'm a better lyricist. A better singer. And I like to think a better all around songwriter. There's no reason why I can't continue to improve and challenge myself. For instance, I just did Atonal, a prized underground electronic festival in Berlin, with Alessio Natalizia [AKA Not Waving]. I'm in that world! My wife and I have a band called Black Phoebe, she makes music on synths and drum machines, and I make up singing parts over them. That's really where my heart is. That's what's coming next.

**Are you ambitious?**

That's out of me now. I get up every day and I write music. I'm compelled to do that. I love it. I've lived a life beyond my wildest expectations – never being a star, but I've still been able to somehow survive. I own my own home. I'm in a happy marriage. I have people in my life, like Al, who can make all this shit possible. I have my pets. I love to go out and play shows, now. That was another thing I hated doing. I loved to travel, but I hated singing live. I always felt uncomfortable. A lot of that had to do with the material I was singing. But that's all gone. I'm a 54-year-old man. I don't give a shit about anything any more. Nothing! Anything could happen and it's fine.

*Mark Lanegan Band's Somebody's Knocking is out now on Heavenly. His memoir, Sing Backwards And Weep, is published in April 2020 by White Rabbit.*

## MARK'S ENTRIES

**Keith Cameron** picks three peak Lanegan albums.

### THE SOLO CLASSIC

**Mark Lanegan**
Whiskey For The Holy Ghost
★★★★★
SUB POP, 1994

Discovering *Astral Weeks* was recorded in three days, Lanegan aspired to a comparable transcendent spirituality on his second solo album. It took him three years, waylaid by drugs and his obsessive perfectionism (producer Jack Endino had to physically prevent him throwing the tapes in a river) but he pretty much got there: 13 masterfully arranged, beautifully sung lysergic-folk meditations on the darkness beneath the light.

### THE LAST CALL

**Screaming Trees**
Dust
★★★★
EPIC, 1996

The final Screaming Trees album, recorded in LA amid crushing mutual antipathy, still carried traces of Lee Conner's corny psych fixation. Yet with a warm-hug George Drakoulias production, Lanegan's mournful commentary on vanquished hope came wrapped in killer tunes. Josh Homme joined for the subsequent tour and clearly noted the singer's tonal skills.

### THE NEW DAWN

**Mark Lanegan Band**
Blues Funeral
★★★★★
4AD, 2012

His second 'band' album, eight years after the guest-starred *Bubblegum*, saw an almighty creative rebirth. With producer Alain Johannes urging him on, Lanegan decisively turned his vessel towards a mahogany-veneer electro-gnarl, with sublime Krautrock decoration and new levels of mordant poetry ("Please don't turn off my radio/Not with the rope still swinging/While eternity's mouth is singing"). An epic soundtrack for an indomitable voice.

**High voltage: the electrifying Betty Wright on-stage in the mid-'70s, putting a vamp on it.**

# She's The Boss

**Betty Wright** is the unsung heroine of '70s soul, the Miami-born belter of the classic Clean Up Woman who launched her own label and turned bad luck in love into grist for the mill. And in 2019, she's still going strong, getting her share. "We cried all the way to the bank," she assures **Geoff Brown.**

SOON AFTER SOUNDCHECK ON A hot July Sunday afternoon, Betty Wright sits in the bowels of London's Barbican arts complex, dyed red hair tied back while her face is lightly brushed with make-up. Dressed in black sweater and slacks, she holds herself erect. Later, she will be resplendent in spangled dress and cape, the latter discarded as she channels pain and joy in soul ballads and funky R&B originals. There is humour, too, on-stage and in conversation, tempered by the harder realities of a lifetime in the business. As hubbub rises backstage, she shouts for quiet while she's being interviewed. These days, she expects to be heard. It wasn't always so.

"Because of my age, I think a lot of it was… not even being taken advantage of," she sighs, "but I don't cry over spilt milk. It's like you're returning to somewhere you don't even want to be. I'm just glad that I lived through it all."

At 65, Wright has taken everything thrown at her by life and the record industry and used as much of it as she could to her benefit. A powerful and communicative, but routinely underestimated and exploited soul-gospel singer, writer and producer in the '60s and '70s, in the '80s Wright also became a full-steam-ahead, can-do businesswoman in stubbornly male-dominated territory, launching her own label and doing session and production work with a broad range of singers including, most recently, Skip Marley and The O'Jays, artists at the beginning and in the later stages of their careers.

None of that music, however, has surpassed the best of her own catalogue, which will form the bedrock of her show at the Barbican tonight. Like Aretha Franklin and Mavis Staples, Wright's gospel roots are never far from the surface, rising up in a testifying chorus, or a soaring vamp as a song fades. Inevitable, really. Born in Miami, Florida in 1953 and raised in its Overtown projects, Wright sang gospel from the age of two with her four elder brothers and one sister. Her mother, Rosa, was fêted in gospel circles in the South. "She had her own fanbase," says Wright. "People would travel to see Mother Wright and her kids."

At close quarters, the young Wright witnessed many of the legends of genre: The Highway QCs, The Swan Silvertones, Dorothy Norwood, Shirley Caesar, The Sensational Nightingales. Recruited into family group The Echoes Of Joy, she made her first record aged two-and-a-half. In churches, she recalls, "They stand you in the corner, you go to the bathroom, then it was time to sing. Charles would sing the top notes, I would be on the bottom. People would say, 'Look, isn't she cute?' And I'd be singing so *deep* (*laughs*)."

It was a caring if regimented environment. "I got a lot of correcting," she remembers, "a lot of rebuke, a lot of chastisement. It was like having your ➢

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< mum, another momma and a whole set of dads." Eventually, the Wright children explored other music. "We weren't allowed to listen to R&B in my home until I got much older. Then, my older brothers was playing in a band and Charles would say, 'We'll give you two dollars, learn the words to this song.' I don't know if it was a conscious thought, but there was no money in gospel. It was just a matter of economics."

WHEN SHE WAS ABOUT 12, WRIGHT won a radio station's 'name the song' contest. Picking up her prize, a copy of Billy Stewart's 1966 hit Summertime, at the Deep City record store in Miami's Liberty City neighbourhood, she was overheard singing by the men running the studio in the back. One of them was Clarence Reid. "One of the only real geniuses I've met," declares Wright today. "He would teach me how a song had to be crafted, how to sing to make a song be believed in. You are not the most important thing on that record. It's the words. If it's a bad song, it's just a beat. You make the story the most important thing."

Betty was soon recording background vocals on Deep City recordings and then, in 1967, aged 13, she cut her first pop single: Paralyzed/Good Lovin'. When Reid and partner Willie Clarke were lured to record distributor Henry Stone's TK set-up, Wright eventually followed. Many labels sheltered under Stone's TK umbrella – Drive, Cat, Dash, Sunshine Sound, Glades, Clouds and more – and Wright was assigned to Alston, a label set up by Stone and Steve Alaimo.

Avuncular and Colonel Sanders-looking in later life, Henry Stone was, she says, "the best and worst person ever. The best because he was like a daddy to me. But I think it's almost incestuous when you rob your child, and I think I worked loyally and did all the right things, and when I came to get paid, all the money had been taken to promote [other acts]."

*Betty Wright Live!* was a Top 30 US album in 1978, but Wright wouldn't have known it from the remuneration she saw. What also rankled was the attribution of writing and production credits which, she alleges, didn't reflect her input.

By then, the mature voice in a young frame that had entranced gospel congregations was entrenched in R&B/pop, exemplified by 1971's classic Clean Up Woman, a gritty, funky Number 6 US hit and the first of several cautionary tales to wives about potential rivals – 1971 single Baby Sitter and '72's Secretary were others. Not yet out of her teens, she was in the vanguard of Southern soul relationship counsellors alongside Millie Jackson, Denise LaSalle and others. Wright's third LP, '73's *Hard To Stop*, cemented her position with tracks like The Experts, the title track and Gimme Back My Man.

In 1974, TK switched distribution from Atlantic to RCA and Wright was immediately rewarded by a UK breakthrough – Top 30 hits with a punchy version of Allen Toussaint's Shoorah! Shoorah! and disco-paced Where Is The Love, credited to Wright, Willie Clarke, and K.C. & The Sunshine Band's Howie Casey and Rick Finch. Casey, she said, had written a mouthful of lyrics. "I said, 'KC, that song's got to be edited down. You've got to not put so many words in the song,' and then I just put a whole vamp on it."

Getty (4)

**It's the Wright time: (far left) Betty in London, 1975, with Shoorah! Shoorah! in the UK Top 30; (insets) her on-record journey from Deep City to Ms. B; (above top) on-stage with Joss Stone, 2010; caped crusader, on-stage 2012; (above right) Betty Wright, not one for looking back.**

By now, TK had become shorthand for 'Miami Sound' and synonymous with disco thanks to the Sunshine Band (who'd started out as The Ocean Liners, an early Wright backing combo), George and Gwen McCrae, Bahamian band T-Connection, Timmy Thomas and others. Wright, meanwhile, was sticking with R&B, right down to earthy live shows featuring a medley of impersonations, advice on how to deal with the opposite sex and a version of Tonight Is The Night (ie. "Tonight is the night/That you make me a woman") that was too steamy for some. "I think to the day she died my mother wished I'd never cut Tonight Is The Night," says Wright. "She would say, 'Did you really sing *that*?'"

AFTER TWO ALBUMS ON Epic, Wright's sales began to wane. The second, 1983's *Wright Back At You*, was partly recorded at Dynamic Sound in Jamaica.

"In Miami we were into reggae a lot longer than [the rest of] America, more than New York, because that was a quick trip, a cheap trip," she says. "I been singing reggae long before I knew Bob [Marley]. I did Tears On My Pillow with Johnny Nash when I was about 12."

## Wright stuff

Four of Betty's best. By Geoff Brown.

### Hard To Stop

*(Alston, 1973)*

**Hard to credit that Wright is still in her teens as she warns of no good men (title track) or predatory women (Baby Sitter, Gimme Back My Man) to funky Southern soul grooves and the catchy pop aim of Sweet Wonder. Highlight of Wright's first stage.**

### Live

*(Alston, 1978)*

**A convincing live singer whose raps are liberally laced with humour, BW here gives later period favourite Tonight Is The Night, the disco-paced Where Is The Love, a 100mph Lovin' Is Really My Game and a medley showing off amusing skills as an impersonator.**

### Mother Wit

*(Ms. B, 1987)*

**Breaking free to set up her own label, Wright mixed slinky '80s dancers (Ms. Time; Miami Groove) with trademark slices of emotional life (No Pain (No Gain), After The Pain) and easy flowing midtempo grooves (Love Days; Unsolicited Advice).**

### The Movie

*(S-Curve, 2011)*

**Now signed to S-Curve, Wright teamed with the musicianly soul-rooted band of the era, The Roots, on a set leaning on past songs and styles as pressed on to the future. She's still hot on relationships and responsibility (Go!; Hollywould). A new set is long overdue.**

## "All the pain I was going through, I felt if I could sing about it I could get it out of my system."

*Wright Back At You* also included two songs with Luther Vandross backing vocals and four songs written by various Jacksons (mostly Marlon). Unfortunately, it was released on the same day, and the same label, as an album by another Jackson scion: *Thriller*.

Wright's experiences had given her the grounding, and friends lent her the confidence, to launch her own label, Ms. B. "So much of what was going on was based on people you didn't get to meet," she says. "[And] I figured I can count as well as anybody." Wright even drew the label's logo: a pair of ladies' platform soles tapping to the beat: "I was known for my shoes, always."

Ms. B's first release, her 1985 single Pain, was typically forthright, written after the break-up of her second marriage, to gospel pianist Patrick Palmer. Her first, a 1976 union with educator Jerome McCray, had failed four years later, and a third, to Noel Williams (AKA Jamaican DJ King Sporty), would also end in divorce. The marriages have produced five children and more songs, such as No Pain (No Gain) and After The Pain that explored the hurt. "Oh here she comes with another pain song," Wright laughs today. "[But] all the pain I was going through in my life, I just felt if I could sing about it I could get it out of my system. We cried all the way to the bank. It has never stopped selling."

Wright's voice had long become a passport to the widest possible working opportunities, from singing on Alice Cooper's 1978 B-side No Tricks to producing a track on Tom Jones's 2008 album *24 Hours*, and on to a stinging rap at the end of Richard 'Dimples' Fields' She's Got Papers On Me, brusquely setting the philanderer straight, to production on Joss Stone's first two LPs, *Soul Sessions* and *Mind, Body And Soul*, and her most recent work on The O'Jays' album *The Last Word*, and with Skip Marley. "He is just like his grandpa," she insists. "I toured the world with Bob and he's just so much like Bob, yet he's never known him."

As she prepares to rest up before tonight's show, we talk about the album selling at a stand in the lobby, her 2011 set with The Roots, *Betty Wright: The Movie*.

Her recollection of an exchange with that excellent band captures her spirit perfectly. Leaving the Grammys – she had been pipped to Traditional R&B Vocal Performance by John Legend & The Roots – "I said, 'Congratulations Questlove, if I had to lose I'm glad I lost to my boys.' I walked about five steps, looked back over my shoulder: 'Took *10* of y'all to beat me!'"

# IF YOU

## ABOVE & BEYOND

Bermondsey Docks,
London, May 21, 1969

**Russell's pictures for the front and (in this case) interior of the original octagonal sleeve of *Through The Past Darkly (Big Hits Vol. 2)* would be the last to feature Brian Jones with the group. "I'm pretty sure it was Mick's idea to shoot from a crane," says Russell. "Mick tended to take control in these situations. Like the reason that album cover looks like it does is because I asked him what the background should be and he said, 'Blue.'"**

# WANT BLOOD

**TWELVE MONTHS OF TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY FED INTO *LET IT BLEED*, THE ALBUM THAT CONFIRMED THE ROLLING STONES' GREATNESS. AS A DELUXE REISSUE IS RELEASED, PHOTOGRAPHER ETHAN RUSSELL UNPICKS 1969 IN RARE AND UNSEEN SHOTS FROM OLYMPIC, LOS ANGELES, HYDE PARK AND COTCHFORD FARM. "IT WAS THE YEAR OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY," HE TELLS DANNY ECCLESTON.**

ETHAN RUSSELL'S PHOTOS OF THE Rolling Stones' poignant July 1969 show in Hyde Park would have been a whole lot better, he contends, if he hadn't eaten those brownies.

"It was the morning of the show and I'm with Mick Jagger at a meeting with the film producer," Russell tells MOJO. "The producer's girlfriend offered us brownies. Mick declined – smart guy – but I ate two. How was I to know they were spiked, for Christ's sake!?"

As Russell and the Stones gathered, pre-show, at the Londonderry Hotel, Russell started to feel "the light start to act like it's underwater". The snapper, who'd never shot a gig before, was put on a tower to the side of the stage – uncomfortably high in all senses of the word.

"I'd been told that they were gonna release these butterflies, for Brian," he recalls, "and I'd imagined this beautiful sort of Disney cinematic event. Then they turn up in these *cardboard boxes* and when they finally come out they look like *moths*."

**"THE ONLY LAW THAT MATTERED AT ALTAMONT WAS 'THE SHOW MUST GO ON'."**
**ETHAN RUSSELL**

Russell's record of proceedings features in a portfolio of his peerless shots – previewed over the next few pages of MOJO – in *Let It Bleed: 50th Anniversary Edition*, a bumper box set of the Stones' first unalloyed masterpiece. In 2019, it's tempting to see the album's success as a given, but when Russell started work with the band, in late 1968, neither party's position was robust. The San Francisco native had barely begun a photographic career but had fallen in with the Stones through the embryonic Rolling Stone magazine's London stringer, Jonathan Cott. Meanwhile, the Stones were running out of cash and couldn't play live, hampered by various pending court cases and an increasingly burdensome Brian Jones. "It was the Year Of Living Dangerously," says Russell. "None of us knew if we were going to be able to keep doing this one day to the next."

Jones was the most precarious element of all, and Russell's shots speak vividly of the Little Prince's decline, capped by his death on July 2, 1969. Shadowing the Stones for most of that 12-month period (and beyond: Russell returned to document the Dionysian circus of the group's American Tour 1972), he chronicled recording sessions, shot the Honky Tonk Women sleeve, and accompanied the Stones on the fateful 1969 US tour that ➢

Ethan Russell, WENN

culminated in the disaster at Altamont.

"There's no question you could have died at Altamont," Russell reflects. "And people *did* die. I left while the Stones were still on stage – I'm not a war photographer – and I walked to where I thought the helicopter was, but there were no lights and this is a field in the middle of nowhere. Got through this chain-link fence and finally there's the helicopter, with maybe 12 or 14 people in it. There's no way it's certified to carry that many people. And it couldn't take off vertically. So I could've died like that. There were many ways to die at Altamont."

Russell credits the Stones with a crash course in the entertainment industry ("It was as if the only law that mattered at Altamont was 'the show must go on'"), but for all its trials, he looks back on 1969 as the Indian Summer of a golden age.

"I really saw the change on that '72 tour," he laments. "By then, the 'sex, drugs and rock'n'roll' thing had kicked in. Music was becoming about showbusiness again. I mean, Truman Capote was turning up backstage. Truman Capote? I mean, what the *fuck*?"

## MICKS TAPE

Olympic Studios, London, May/June 1969

**Mick Taylor, you are joining The Rolling Stones – no pressure. "I'm not sure if this is actually his audition," says Russell, "but if not it's not long after. It was a real trial by fire for him, and of course his first show was Hyde Park. Mick Taylor was pretty quiet, but my favourite Altamont quote is by Mick Taylor. Someone asked him if Altamont was the End Of The '60s, and Mick said, 'Well, yes. Wasn't it December 1969?'"**

## PROOF POSITIVE

Laurel Canyon, Los Angeles, October, 1969

**Mick and Keith check the *Let It Bleed* cover artwork as they prepare for November shows in the US. "This kind of reminds me how everything was exploding around them," says Russell. "And the speed of it. You make the album, you put it out, you do the tour to promote the album. But they cared about the details, too. Especially Mick. Mick is all about paying attention."**

## ➔ HE BANGS THE DRUMS

Olympic Studios, London, November, 1968

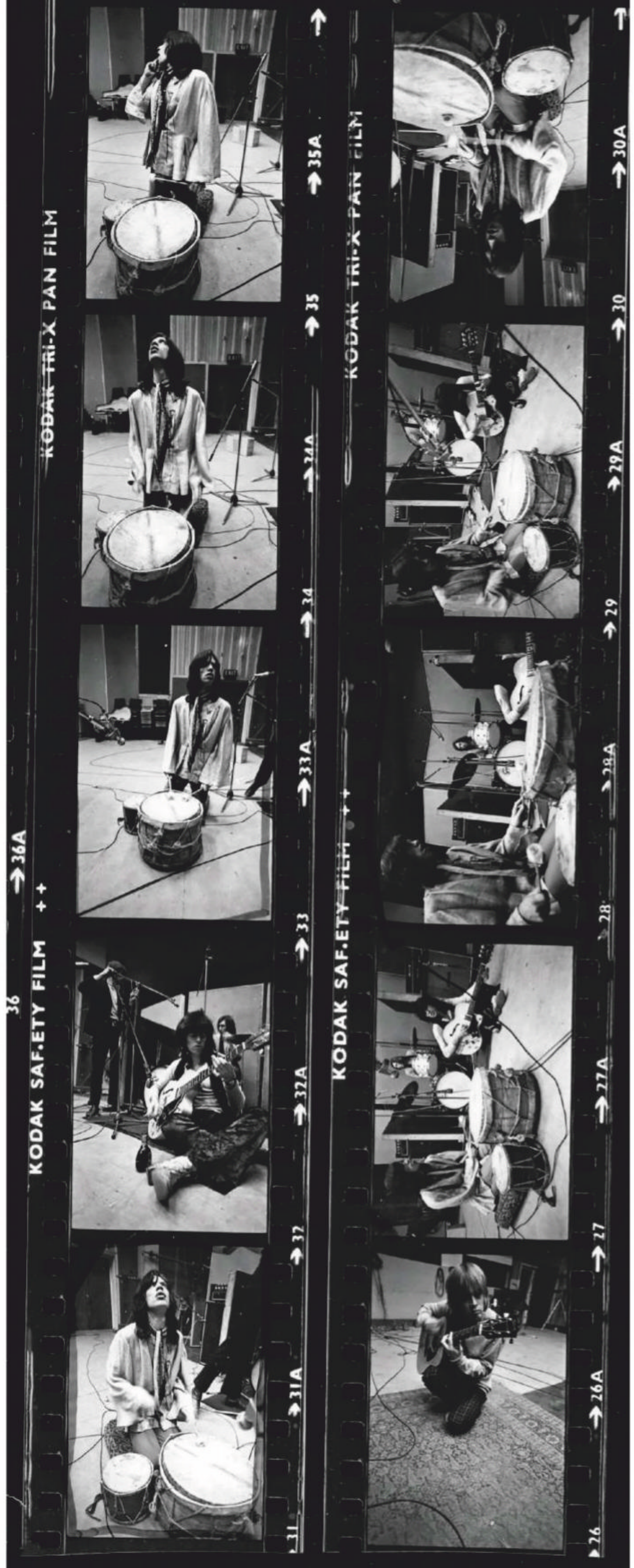
**Mick, Keith, Charlie and, in one frame, Brian, likely on the day You Can't Always Get What You Want was recorded. Even this early in the album's life, notes Russell, "Brian kind of wasn't around a lot." Soon, the extent of Jones's alienation from the Stones, and his physical decline, would be clearer. "Brian was the first to die," says the snapper. "Before him, you didn't expect it. After Brian, you were looking out for it."**

## ➔ 1+5

Rolling Stones office, Maddox Street, London, November 1968

**Film director Jean Luc Godard (with glasses) – in London for the premiere of the Sympathy For The Devil (AKA 1+1) film – is photographed with the group. "I was shooting the guy from the Observer shooting *them*," says Russell of the unusual perspective. "I have to say, Godard and the band did not seem to have much of a rapport."**

Ethan Russell (5)



## ↑ LIFE WITH BRIAN

Cotchford Farm, East Sussex, 1969

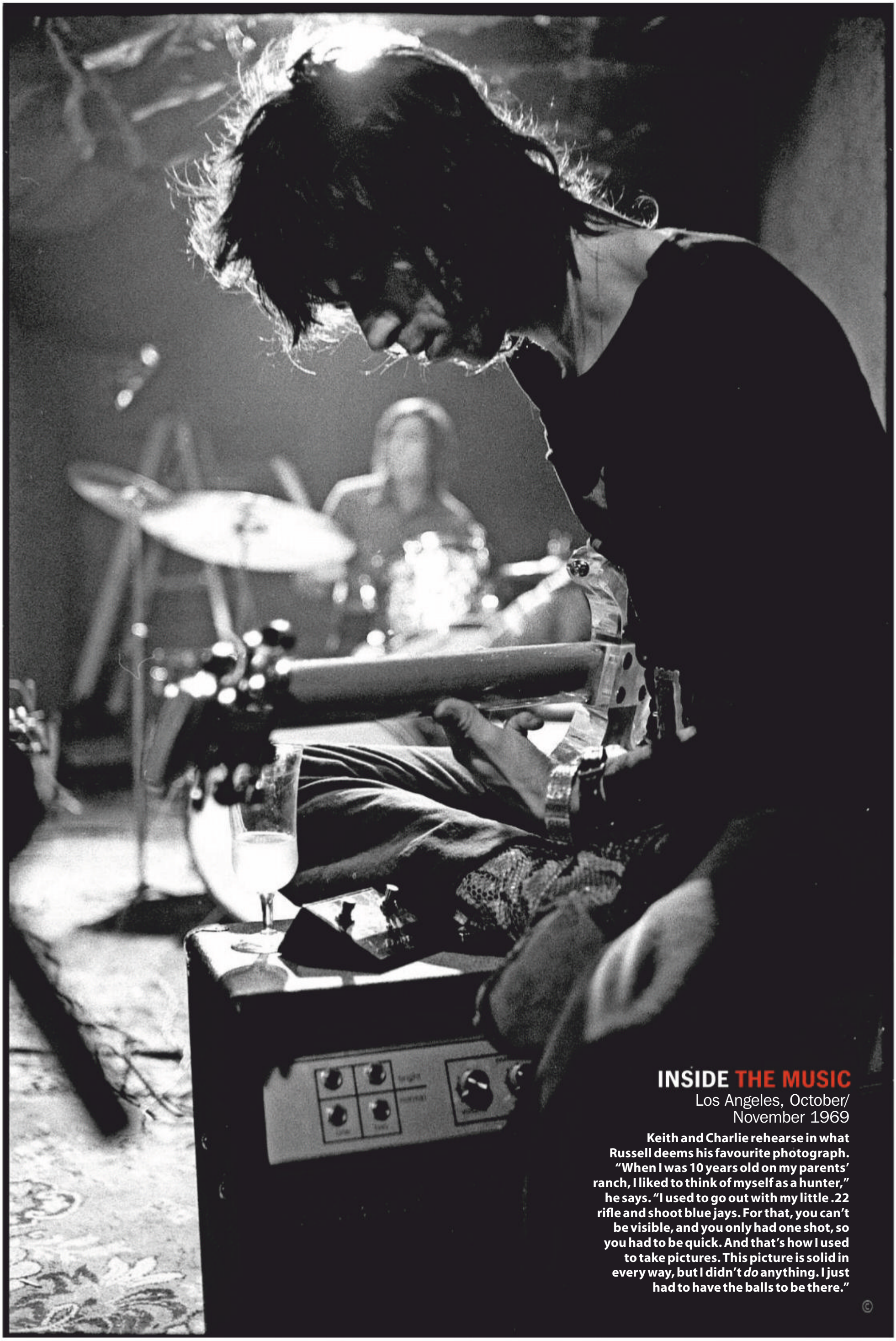
**At the house Jones bought in November '68, and at which he would die, aged 27, on July 2, 1969. "This is the last time I shot him," says Russell. "I remember we'd woken him up and he came out acting up for the cameras – something none of the others ever did. But the pictures never went anywhere; the Stones were desperate for American visas and the shirt was too controversial – there was another shot with a gun. In these pictures he looks about 46 years old."**

## ↓ WEEP FOR ADONAIS

Hyde Park, London, July 5, 1969

**Behind the stage at the elegiac Stones In The Park show, Russell snaps some blow-ups from the *Beggars Banquet* album artwork that feature Jones. "This is one of those pictures you take that you think nothing of," says the photographer. "It's only afterwards that it takes on this significance. The show didn't start as a memorial to Brian. It became one."**

Ethan Russell (3)



## INSIDE THE MUSIC

Los Angeles, October/ November 1969

**Keith and Charlie rehearse in what Russell deems his favourite photograph. "When I was 10 years old on my parents' ranch, I liked to think of myself as a hunter," he says. "I used to go out with my little .22 rifle and shoot blue jays. For that, you can't be visible, and you only had one shot, so you had to be quick. And that's how I used to take pictures. This picture is solid in every way, but I didn't *do* anything. I just had to have the balls to be there."**

©

Ethan Russell (3)

## ↑ HONKY TONK HEROES

Gigi strip club, Soho, London, 1969

**The shoot for the cover of the Honky Tonk Women 45 indulged the Stones' weakness for fancy dress. "I'm definitely operating in the genre, for lack of a better word, of Rolling Stones 45 covers," says Russell. "You know, I was still in college when I saw the pictures of them dressed up as WAACs [for Have You Seen Your Mother, Baby, Standing In The Shadow?] and I thought that was the funniest thing I'd ever seen. The two girls were a pub act called Coffee & Cream; they turned up dressed to the nines and had the time of their lives…"**

## ↖ BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS

Los Angeles, October 1969

**Keith Richards, in Nudie shirt, and Mick Taylor, plus tour manager Sam Cutler, adjust to a new day. "It's a sweet picture," says Russell. "I love the intimacy, and the God's Eye in the top-right corner is such an emblem of the time. Champagne for breakfast? No, I think the champagne would have been from the night before…"**

## ← PRINCE CHARMING

Olympic Studios, London, November 1968

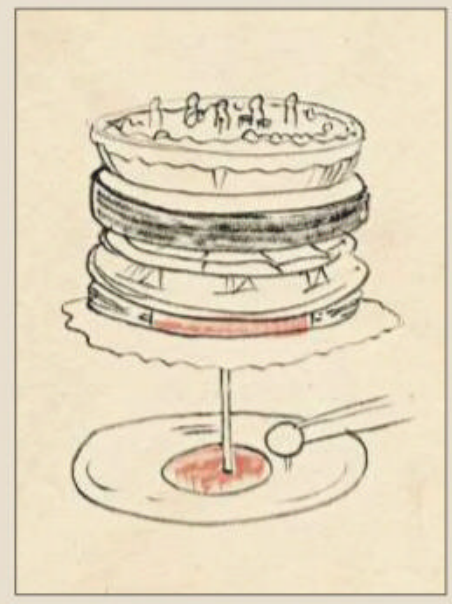
**For *Let It Bleed*'s epic closer, You Can't Always Get What You Want, the Stones envisaged a gospel chorus; instead they got the rather more staid Bach Choir. "It was kind of hilarious. I mean the gag was the juxtaposition, right?" says Russell. "The choir people were kind of bemused, but the Stones were excited about it. You can see it in Brian's smile."**

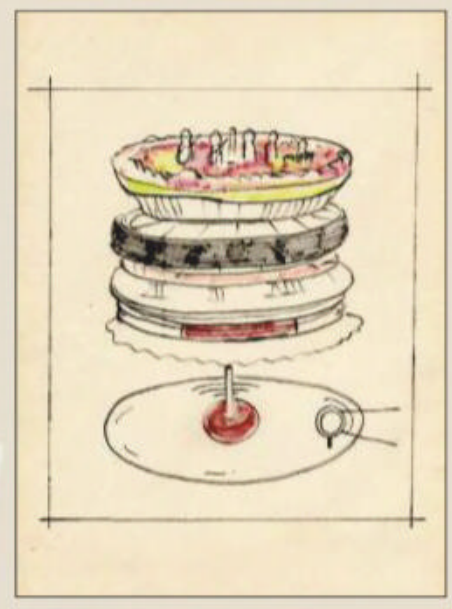
# DESSERT SONGS

*Let It Bleed*'s artwork-in-progress is disinterred in the 50th Anniversary reissue. Tasty!

MICK JAGGER'S original thought for an album cover designer was MC Escher, but the noted Dutch creator of optical effects – then aged 70 and preoccupied with his last major work, a mind-fucking woodcut entitled Snakes – turned him down. It fell to Keith Richards to commission the US graphic designer Robert Brownjohn, a fun-loving staple of the Swinging London scene, who developed the idea of a cake of stacked circular objects: a plate, film can, clock face, pizza, tyre and decorated cake on top of a vinyl LP being played by an old phonograph arm, reflecting the album's working title: *Automatic Changer*.

The sketches used by Brownjohn to brief then-obscure cake-maker Delia Smith are included as prints inside the new *Let It Bleed* anniversary box. "I was **working then as a jobbing home economist with a food photographer who shot for commercials and magazines,"** Smith recalled of the commission. **"I'd cook anything they needed. One day they said they wanted a cake for a Rolling Stones record cover. It was just another job at the time. They wanted it to be very over-the-top and as gaudy as I could make it."**





*Ethan Russell's photographs are taken from the Let It Bleed: 50th Anniversary Edition [Super Deluxe], released November 1.*

MOJO PRESENTS

**From wild west Wales to the wild West Coast, through burnout and break-up, CATE LE BON's bewitching art pop has come a long way, baby. Now everyone from Deerhunter to the VU's viola player wants a piece of her. "I didn't want to shrink to accommodate," she tells JUDE ROGERS.**

Photography by **KIRSTEN McTERNAN**

ON A HIGH RIDGE IN DEEPEST WEST Wales, up a tangle of lanes, past rusting machinery, felled trees and quarries, sits the hamlet of Penboyr. Here, in a stone-fronted cottage set back from the road, a retired couple are about to take their dog for a walk – a bold move as the autumn weather is threatening wildness. Their daughter is making coffee in the kitchen and finding the biscuits, before she hugs them goodbye, and we settle into the small, stone-walled living room. "Two days being looked after," says Cate Le Bon, smiling. "It's been a treat."

Le Bon grew up here, and has returned to visit family – a brief 48-hour window between festival appearances and recording sessions in Paris and the US. Outside, it's bleakly beautiful, not unlike the cover art setting on her Mercury-nominated 2019 LP *Reward*, which showed her in a glamorous red dress, stalking a barren landscape. Today she contrasts less starkly with her surroundings, her clothes dark and casual, like a Velvet Underground member on their day off, her bleached hair pushed back from her face as if by a stiff breeze. But you suspect that Cate Le Bon could be anywhere, dressed anyhow, and still stand out.

Thirteen years into a fascinating solo career, Le Bon has recently emerged as an international icon of experimental pop, with admirers as varied as John Cale, St. Vincent, Jeff Tweedy, Warpaint and Deerhunter. She co-produced the last-named act's latest album, *Why Hasn't Everything Already Disappeared?,* and next month releases an EP she made two years ago with Deerhunter's eccentric frontman, Bradford Cox, while dividing time between Wales and Los Angeles, where she's plugged into an ongoing psychedelic pop renaissance. Meanwhile, *Reward* continues to attract admirers.

But 2017 – the year much of this music was conceived – could have gone very differently. It began with a retreat from everything, a decision to spend a year in the Lake District, making furniture, entirely alone. Why? "Because I felt fatigued, had had a big breakup, and my life had become unrecognisable," says Le Bon. "I just took myself off like a sick cat. I needed a reckoning with myself."

BORN CATE TIMOTHY ("LE BON" WAS SCRAWLED on early gig posters by her then-boyfriend Huw Evans, AKA singer-songwriter-guitarist H. Hawkline, a jokey reference to Duran Duran singer Simon, before it stuck) in Penboyr in 1983, Le Bon attended a Welsh-language school, although her parents didn't speak it. "Dad's mum discouraged him from doing so as a child, and he felt robbed by that," she says. "And mum's English, so I always had this kind of dual existence."

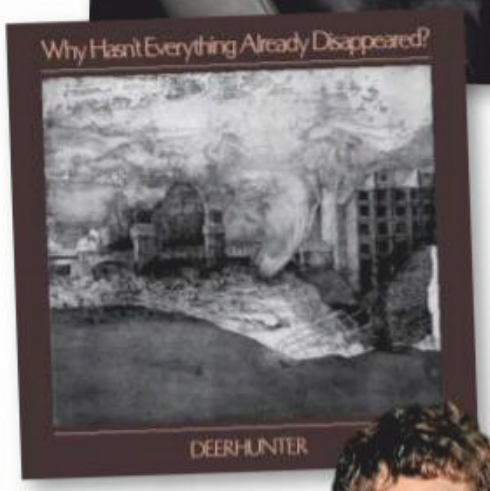
Her unusual, rangy voice didn't fit the Welsh school choir format either, so she formed a band and won a school competition. "It sounds like a terrible premise for a really shit film, doesn't it?" she laughs. "But I was lucky to get a sense of my own expression recognised early on." That deepened when Welsh-language gigs began cropping up in nearby towns: she saw Gorky's Zygotic Mynci and Super Furry Animals in the mid-1990s: "To be exposed to bands getting success on the ➢

**Deep in the woods: Cate Le Bon, Penboyr, Camarthenshire, September 2019.**

Country feedback: Cate as horse whisperer; (insets below) Neon Neon and Deerhunter LPs; Huw Evans AKA H. Hawkline.

**"MAKING MUSIC IS A VULNERABLE THING, AND YOU NEED PEOPLE CLOSE TO MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE YOU *CAN* BE VULNERABLE."**

**CATE LE BON**




< outskirts of Britpop, but doing their own thing entirely, at 13, was incredible." Ten years later, SFA's Gruff Rhys spotted her singing solo in Cardiff; she'd just ditched singing in bands because she'd realised she didn't "want to shrink to accommodate".

Becoming part of Neon Neon – Rhys's collaboration with Boom Bip – on 2008's *Stainless Style*, Le Bon established a pattern that mapped out her later career: through Boom Bip she met musicians in the US; through Rhys, she entrenched herself in Wales's hugely supportive indie scene. H. Hawkline, her boyfriend and backing band member, was part of that, and this intimacy helped her be bold with her creativity. "Making music is quite a vulnerable thing to do," she says, "and you need people close to make you feel like you *can* be vulnerable in front of them."

As a result, her adventurousness and variety shone out. Le Bon's 2009 debut LP, *Me Oh My*, was all sparse, often Bible-black guitars and lo-fi atmospheres. 2012's *Cyrk* shuddered with a different, more raucous guitar jangle. A year later, Le Bon and Evans/Hawkline upped sticks to LA after indie producers Josiah Steinbrick (Devendra Banhart) and Noah Georgeson (Joanna Newsom's *The Milk-Eyed Mender*) encouraged Cate to make a record with them. She fell in love with LA's weird disjointedness. "I'm still enamoured with it," she says. "It's almost like its mythology is the glue that keeps the disjointedness together."

This weird spirit fuelled her creativity. 2013's *Mug Museum* and 2016's *Crab Day* followed, as did work with Kevin Morby and Eleanor Friedberger, plus two albums with White Fence's Tim Presley as the duo DRINKS. (Presley was confrontational on first meeting, Le Bon recalls: "He was smoking and I'm sure he growled at me, but I may have made that up!") With a growing reputation for making bold, progressive pop on her own terms ("She'll really work hard at experimenting and honing a truly original sound," Gruff Rhys tells MOJO… "and she's fearless"), she produced records for Welsh musician Alex Dingley and for her boyfriend. By 2017 she was burnt out.

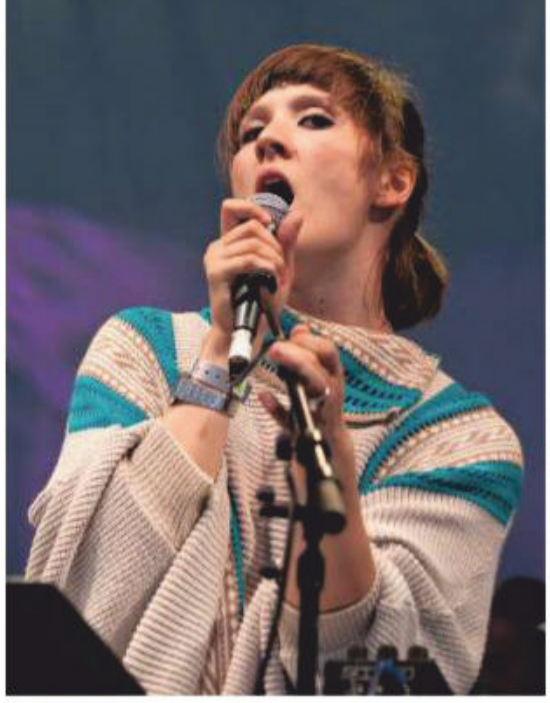
SO, TOO, WERE CATE AND HUW. LE Bon holds her coffee as she talks about her ex, eyes widening often. She is open and warm, but not frightened of discussing tougher subjects. "We'd shared so much of our music together. We'd spent our twenties together. A third of our lives together." She sits on the edge of the chair, smiles, then exhales.

The same year, Evans started dating Aldous Harding; Le Bon shares band members with the New Zealander, including long-term friend Stephen Black (AKA Sweet Baboo). How on earth does that work? "Because Huw is still an absolutely exceptional, wonderful human being," Le Bon says. "We spent so long making sure we were OK for our friends' sakes, and for our own sakes too. You don't want to lose someone you've spent that much time with. That you've loved."

*Reward* came to life, slowly, under that shadow. In her rented Lake District house, there was a piano, which she'd play in the evenings. "All of a sudden, music wasn't under this really intense surveillance it had been under for so long. It became company. A cathartic outlet. A joyous thing." Without a guitar, she wrote lyrics with her melodies for the first time; on previous LPs, words always used to come later. "So [*Reward*] became an intimate, honest record in its content and sentiment. It feels more me than any other record."

Making furniture also slowed time, teaching Le Bon "about the appreciation of what I held in my hand… and not to be focused on phony horizons." And though she says a song like The Light is about Evans – about their friendship, and how they broke up – *Reward* is also about much

Kirsten McTernan (2), Spread Pictures, Alamy (2), Driely Carter.



Into the light: Le Bon live in Copenhagen, June 2019; (above left) at 2009's Green Man Festival; (above right) with Deerhunter's Bradford Cox.

more than that. "It's about how surreal change is in the world around us now, about struggling with change and where you put certain feelings." It helped Le Bon own how she felt. She called it *Reward*, she says, because "it was about me dictating what my own reward was."

Life was brightening towards the end of her Lake District year. Then she received an e-mail that floored her. "It said, 'John Cale is looking for you.' I panicked and cried! I mean, his music resonates so much in my soul. It's so untethered." She sang at his 2018 Futurespective gig at London's Barbican venue and they're resuming their collaboration in Paris this autumn. Cale came back to her, he tells MOJO by e-mail, because of "not being able to figure her out the first time. It's as if she's been on earth through a few incarnations. It makes it more compelling to see what's possible."

SINCE FINISHING *REWARD*, LE BON HASN'T STOPPED. She flew to LA the day after, to work with Bradford Cox as musicians-in-residence at the Marfa Myths Festival in Texas. The rambunctious, whirligig EP they made together, in a week, is finally being released next month: Le Bon calls it "a scrapbook of ideas and different light and energies. I love Bradford! He's an artist who doesn't compromise. He calls bullshit on bullshit."

Cox recently said of Le Bon: "She operates on pure music… she literally creates her own language," and describes her subsequent role on Deerhunter's *Why Hasn't Everything Already Disappeared?* as the album's "inspirational guide". "My job as a producer is to encourage diversion," says Le Bon, "and extract things from people, rather than imprint things on them." She wants to do more of it.

But Le Bon's main joy this year has been touring *Reward*. She raves about her band, a mixture of American and Welsh musicians that reflects her musical life to date. "John Thomas on percussion from Powys – a dreamboat! [San Francisco noise rocker] Dylan Hadley on drums – she's insane!" She's especially been enjoying "reclaiming" her songs live. "Now I just want to perform these songs and feel them. Like it's the first time I'm performing them."

She looks out of the window, to the rain clearing on the ridge, to the rough, open terrain, then the world beyond. She looks unstoppable. "After all," she adds, "you shouldn't always feel safe, should you?"

Anti-safety zone: Le Bon contemplates her reward.

# Bon VOYAGES

The wide, strange world of **Cate Le Bon**, on record. By **Danny Eccleston**.

## ME OH MY

***(Irony Bored, 2009)***

**Le Bon's solo debut felt like a door slowly opening on an alternate universe – part Bagpuss reverie, part obsessional fever-dream. Minimal guitar and junk shop keyboards sketch out psych pop perfection like Vashti Bunyan morphing with Syd Barrett. "Baby, I'm headed for the black," she sings on Sad Sad Feet; yet the limelight was calling, distantly.**

## REWARD

***(Mexican Summer, 2019)***

**The mature masterpiece – a cousin, in its beautiful wide-open spaces, of Deerhunter's *Why Hasn't Everything Already Disappeared?* Psych tics and lo-fi defaults are bid farewell, as an epic strain of post-*Pet Sounds* progressive radio pop takes over, plus an emotional transparency that, if you were being picky, her music previously lacked.**

## MUG MUSEUM

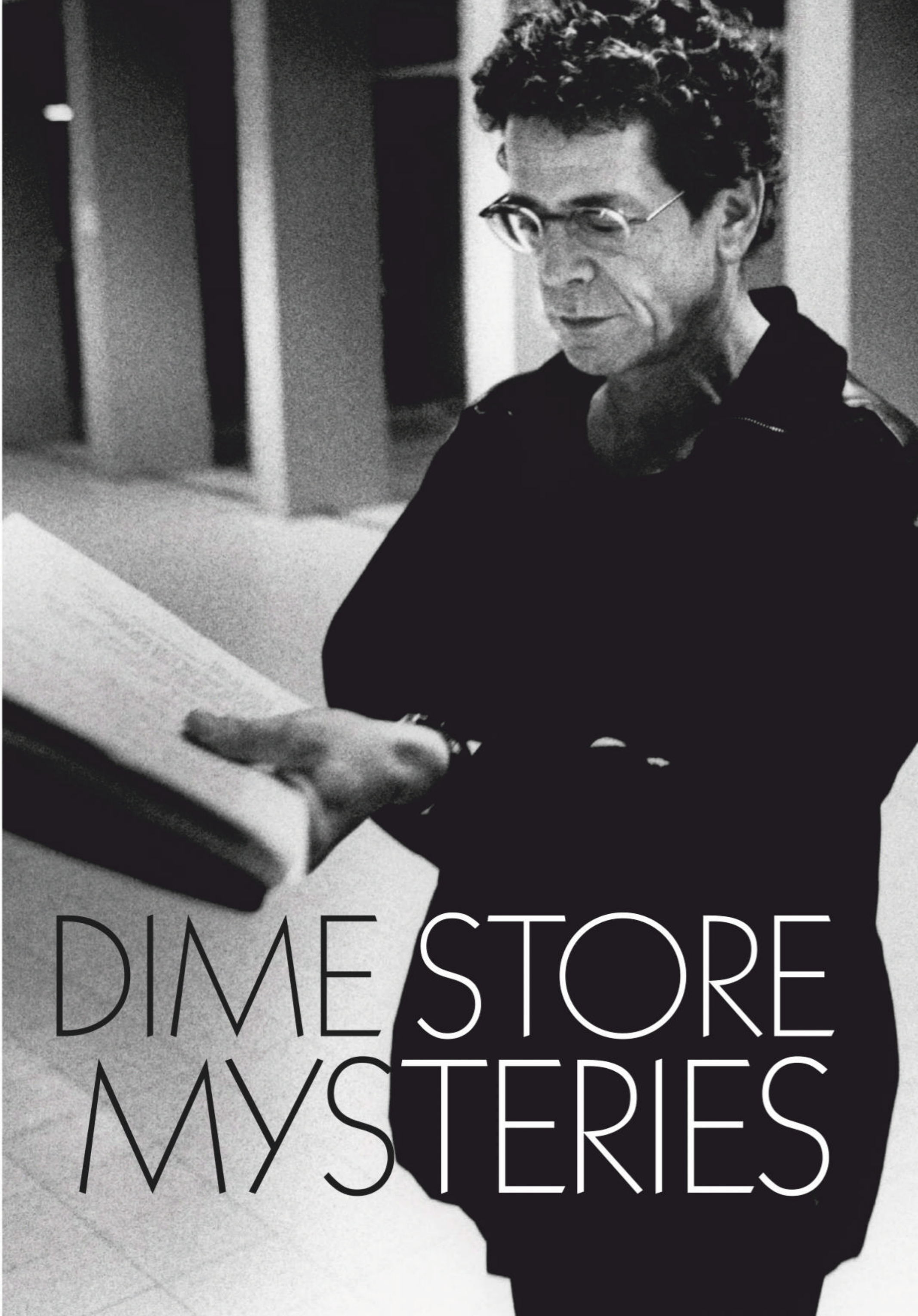
***(Turnstile, 2013)***

**After the freaky VU rockin' of *Cyrk* (2012), the first album of Le Bon's 'LA period' revisited the spare landscapes of her first, only with a more neo-new wave slant. Duke underlines her knack for sustained vocal crescendos; I Think I Knew duets limpidly with dreampop Yank Perfume Genius; Wild's clashing discords scare the horses. Spills and thrills.**

## MYTHS 004 EP

***(Mexican Summer, 2019)***

**In a series previously graced by Ariel Pink and Dungen, Le Bon and Bradford Cox egg each other towards greater strangeness on an experimental seven-track trip. Canto! is a sickly waltz bisected by a Beefheartian fit. Companions In Misfortune is a nightmare haunted by a mad cello. Bracing – though you hope both got something out of their systems here.**



# DIME STORE MYSTERIES

**Mirror man: Lou Reed prepares to read at Crossing Border Festival, The Hague, September 12, 1997; (inset) Laurie Anderson, Madrid, 2018.**

As a new book of his lyrics illuminates **Lou Reed**'s extraordinary world of love and sin, fear and loathing, magic and loss, MOJO presents a moving essay by the artist, and person, who knew him best. "If I close my eyes it's like we're on some of the tours we did together," writes **Laurie Anderson**.

**PLUS:** Anohni, Peter Perrett, Lloyd Cole and Ezra Furman on their favourite Lou Reed songs.

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IN 1992 LOU AND I WERE BOTH invited to play in a John Zorn festival in Munich and John asked all the musicians to feel free to collaborate with each other. Lou and I had never met but we bonded over my new laptop and he asked me to read A Dream from *Songs For Drella* – a piece he wrote in Andy Warhol's voice – in his show while his band played a slow, almost ambient, groove.

I read the hilarious and heart-rending song in the most mundane voice I could find. "Perfect!" said Lou after the show. "Exactly the way I would have read it."

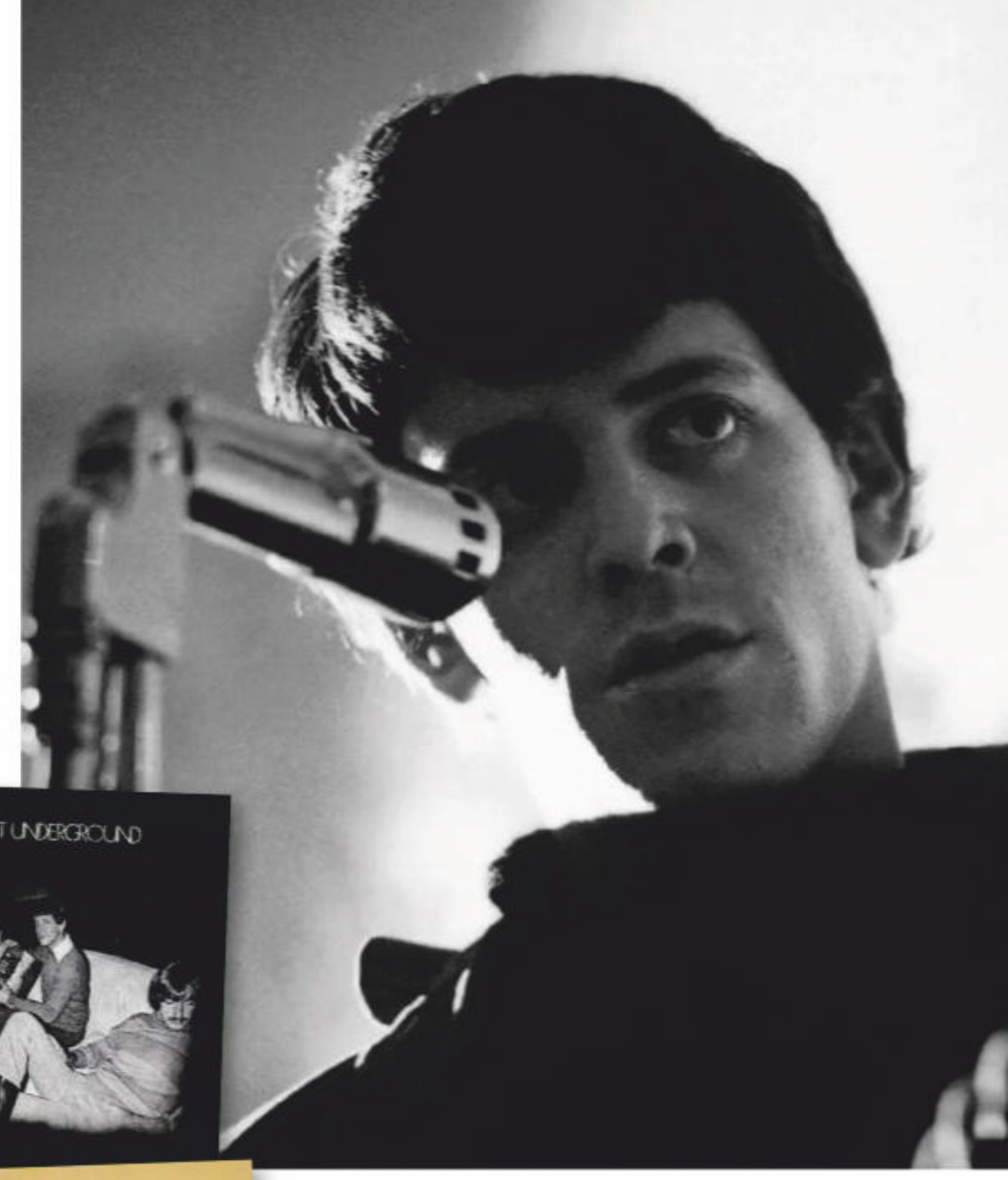
Lou and I were together for 21 years. When we met I didn't know much about him or his songs. I knew he was a rock star but I had the vague impression that The Velvet Underground was a British group. I'm not proud of that but I just mention it because there were many fewer musicians and artists back then and each scene was separate. Since this was New York, each scene was called a world. So there was the art world, the jazz world, the fashion world, the financial world, the rock world, the experimental world and so on. There wasn't much crossover between these worlds, unlike now.

I didn't want to fall in love with a rock icon, but with the man I had actually met. From his *Ecstasy* album on I was suddenly able to see the way life and experience became words, melodies and grooves in Lou's writing. Many of the songs are full of images that are like vivid photographs and home movies for me. People, cars, meetings, dreams, arguments, and places all transformed into words.

Sometimes these subjects were contained (bad dreams made safe in lovely songs) and sometimes they were even more harrowing and articulate than in life. Lou's range was from murderous to tender.

Lou had an indelible voice. He called me many times a day. "It's me," he would say, each time giving those two words a different meaning or referencing one of our countless running inside jokes.

Stepping back, I see that Lou is one of those writers whose voice is inextricably bound to his language. He could do the Jimmy Cagney swaggering street twang. Lou loved tough guys of all kinds but more to the point he loved guys who could play them – like Bruce Lee and Marlon Brando. He liked men who understood and could dig down into the tough guy act – Philip K. Dick, James Ellroy, Hubert Selby, William S. Burroughs, James Lee Burke, Raymond Chandler, and above all his teacher [at Syracuse University], Delmore Schwartz. Like Lou, some of these writers performed their work. And their voices, like the deadpan drawl of William S. Burroughs, drill into the back of your brain and you can never read their words without hearing their voices.




**He found himself transformed: (above) Lou Reed in The Velvet Underground, New York, January 13, 1966; (above right) with Laurie Anderson – the power of the heart; (right) wining Andy Warhol, whose whine Lou imitated well; (insets left) Reed's solo and Velvet Underground albums; (insets opposite) the work of key influential writers.**

WHO WAS LOU THE WRITER? IT'S POSSIBLE TO follow many threads. The tenderness in Perfect Day [*Transformer*, 1972], one of his early songs, is still there many decades later in Turning Time Around [*Ecstasy*, 2000] His empathy, fierce social justice, and uncensored honesty run through his work expressed and reinterpreted through decades of his life as he and the world changed again and again.

Lou wasn't a confessional songwriter. He didn't write about generic "you" and generic "me". He cast himself sometimes as "the waterboy", sometimes as the observer or a mirror. "I'll be your mirror" was the engine of many of his songs. When you look at me you will see yourself – or actually you will see yourself as I see you. Even at his most empathetic and encouraging, Lou was always the writer, the definer. He was also masterful at describing the many alchemical ways we change each other, as in Perfect Day:

*You made me forget myself*
*I thought I was someone else, someone good*

and Pale Blue Eyes:

*If I could make the world as pure*
*and strange as what I see*
*I'd put you in the mirror I put in front of me*

Of course when you're a mirror you're invisible. Magic acts, conjuring and disappearing were magnets for Lou. He was looking for magic. We looked for it in many of our adventures. "I thought if I put out songs about magic they would get in touch with me and tell me their secrets," he said. Lou was restless, always looking for ways to change, to become better, to do things differently.

Sometimes people forget he was also a deeply experimental artist, as in *Metal Machine Music* [1975] and work like the overlapping lyrics of The Murder Mystery [from *The Velvet Underground*, 1969].

Talking was an art form for Lou and he loved to throw in words of his favourite writers, which were seamlessly integrated into his word stream and conversations, punctuated by the loudest, most outrageous guffaw. These brief quoted moments were complete with accents and gestures. They were like miniature plays. He

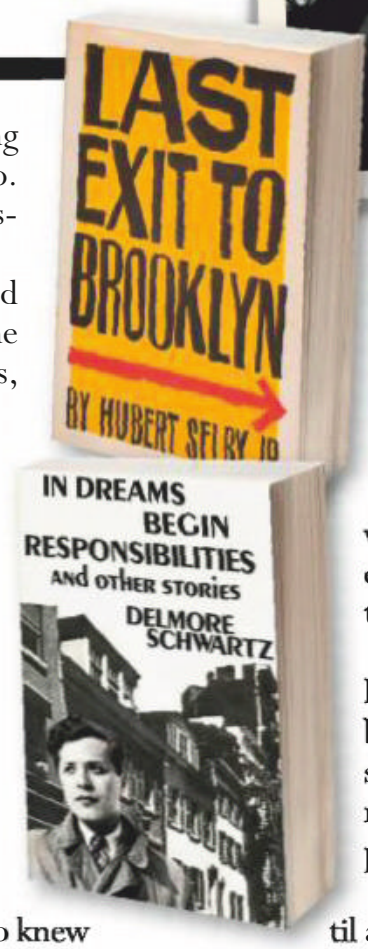
Getty (2)

"'I'LL BE YOUR MIRROR' WAS **THE ENGINE OF MANY OF LOU'S SONGS**. 'WHEN YOU LOOK AT ME YOU WILL SEE YOURSELF.'"

**Laurie Anderson**

would suddenly be the greedy cigar-chomping manager or Andy Warhol whining in his studio. These bits of acting were never cruel or patronising. They were illuminating.

When something absurd happened Lou would often drop in a quote. You had to keep up with the references in these high-speed conversations, which took some hairpin turns. Sometimes Kafka's "Gregor Samsa awoke one morning… and found himself transformed into a gigantic insect…" or Delmore Schwartz's foreboding, "No good will come of this!" Then suddenly he'd be riffing on Hunter S. Thompson in a convertible with his Samoan attorney, an image that never failed to crack him up.




AS A SONGWRITER LOU WAS ALSO essentially a playwright. He created casts of characters who all had names – Rotten Rita, Sally, Billy, Little Joe, Candy, Jim, Caroline, Mulberry Jane, Newspaper Joe. He also knew the difference between himself as a writer, a person, and a rock star. He could shapeshift quickly between these roles. He could take his fame off like one of his leather jackets or he could decide to use the pose as a weapon. We talked about how to do these quick changes in life and how to do them in writing. These conversations often circled around the uselessness of metaphor and the many subjects we shared, among them doubt, angels, justice, parents, and whales.

When we met I was reading and rereading Moby-Dick and thinking about rewriting it as an opera, which turned out to be a somewhat ill-fated adventure. We talked endlessly about what it's like to try to find the voice of a writer, and so when Lou began his Edgar Allan Poe projects – the POEtry opera [2000] and later *The Raven* [2003] – we talked about how to translate the other way – written words into music.

When his words made it into songs they still often sounded like conversations, words from everyday life. And it was the timbre, pitch and tone of his voice that were always telling parallel stories – sometimes commenting on the words, sometimes mocking them, sometimes putting the emphasis on an unexpected syllable.

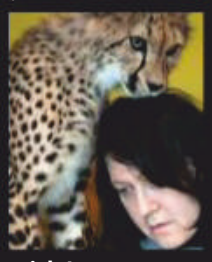
He was always surprising his band. Sometimes he waited until almost the end of the line to fit all the words in, improvising. It was never boring to play with Lou. When the words were inside the music, the beats and bars were there as markers for the language to play against. The words rushed and tumbled ahead, sometimes underlining things, sometimes lagging behind the beats, making a counterpoint that had a whole new meaning. Lou could croon ➢

# SATELLITES OF LOU

Four great Lou Reed songs, hymned by four of his biggest fans.

## CANDY SAYS

*(from The Velvet Underground, 1969)*

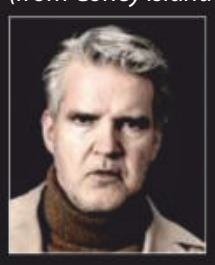


**ANOHNI:** Candy Says reveals Lou's understanding of the outsider experience. I sang it as the encore every night on the Raven tour [2002] with him, and it was his vehicle for introducing me as a singer to his audiences around the world. Singing Candy Says with Lou accompanying me on the guitar was always a monumental experience.

"Candy says I've come to hate my body and all it requires in this world": the line could be read specifically as a recognition of body dysmorphia, or drug addiction, but ultimately I think it resonated with Lou in a more wide-ranging existential way. The song is very, very tender and passive in its peering out onto a landscape from the point of view of feeling defeated or broken, and it teeters in the space between gracious presence and giving up.
The song is at the heart of my relationship with Lou, and it was through the song that I fell in love with Lou.

## A GIFT

*(from Coney Island Baby, 1976)*

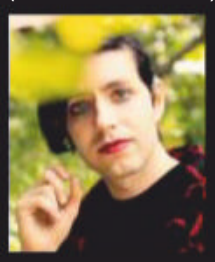


**LLOYD COLE:** *Coney Island Baby* strikes me as a ray of sunlight in the middle of a horrible period for Lou. *Sally Can't Dance* is awful; *Metal Machine Music* is what it is; *Rock And Roll Heart* ain't much to write home about, but on *Coney Island Baby* it's like, for a minute, Lou feels comfortable in his skin.

Half the songs come from the Velvets era, but A Gift doesn't sound like a Velvets song to me. It has that occasionally lovely thing with Lou where you think that maybe he's actually a lovely person – like the beginning of *1969 Live*, when he's talking to the audience. And this has what I think most of his best lyrics have, which is a subtle note of humour – like Leonard Cohen's in a way. So A Gift is Lou at his most playful: "I'm just a gift to the women of the world…" The character is obviously not serious, and there's added complication in the fact that Lou's girlfriend at the time – Rachel – was trans. If this were a Randy Newman song, would the narrator be in earnest? If this were a Randy Newman song the narrator would probably be a serial killer!

## STREET HASSLE

*(from Street Hassle, 1978)*



**EZRA FURMAN:** I'm addicted to Lou Reed. I love his understatement, the way he makes no big deal of the stories he's telling kind of normalises them. There's no demand on the listener to feel a certain way. There's no judgment.

I'm blown away by Street Hassle. There's a scene in it, where someone's OD'd at this guy's party and he has this horribly cold monologue, where he says she should be thrown out in the street and people will just figure it's a hit and run. So heartless. Then he goes on to say: "Some people got no choice/They can never find a voice/To talk with that they can even call their own/So the first thing they see/That allows them the right to be/Why they follow it/You know, it's called bad luck…"

It's like a thesis statement on all of his characters. Nobody would say those two things next to each other except an actual human being, not an artist trying to make art. Most people don't understand what happened to a young woman who overdoses. Maybe they would blame her. Lou Reed doesn't do that.

**Street hassler: Lou in 1978, "Some people got no choice." (Note "shitmakers" hat.)**

"LOU REED **MAKES NO BIG DEAL OF THE STORIES** HE'S TELLING. THERE'S NO JUDGMENT." **Ezra Furman**

## DIRTY BLVD.

*(from New York, 1989)*

**PETER PERRETT:** Dylan was my hero when I was 13. He was the first to put lyrics front and centre, and the first to use that half-spoken delivery. Then The Velvet Underground came along when I was 15, and the combination of lyrics and sound painted pictures that were a gateway to a parallel universe. Heroin, Venus In Furs, Sister Ray were so mysterious and seductive, a world of forbidden pleasures. The VU were my favourite band and had the biggest influence on me.

I can't say I loved Lou's solo stuff as much, but in 1989 the *New York* album seemed to come out of nowhere. It amazed me that at the age of 47, 48 he could do something so good. He always wrote about the street with authority and detachment, but Dirty Blvd. is one of his best street songs. It's difficult to write songs with socio-political content without sounding trite and obvious, but Dirty Blvd. is so eloquent and succinct: "Give me your hungry, your tired and your poor, I'll piss on 'em/That's what the Statue Of Bigotry says/Your poor huddled masses, let's club 'em to death/Get it over with and just dump 'em on the boulevard…" It's a dagger in the heart of America from New York's favourite son. At the end of the decade of Thatcher, Reagan and Milton Friedman, it was exactly what I needed to hear, and I could still listen to this song every day.

*As told to Danny Eccleston*

# "BOWIE MADE A BIG POINT OF SAYING TO ME, '***LULU* IS LOU'S GREATEST WORK**. THIS IS HIS MASTERPIECE.'"

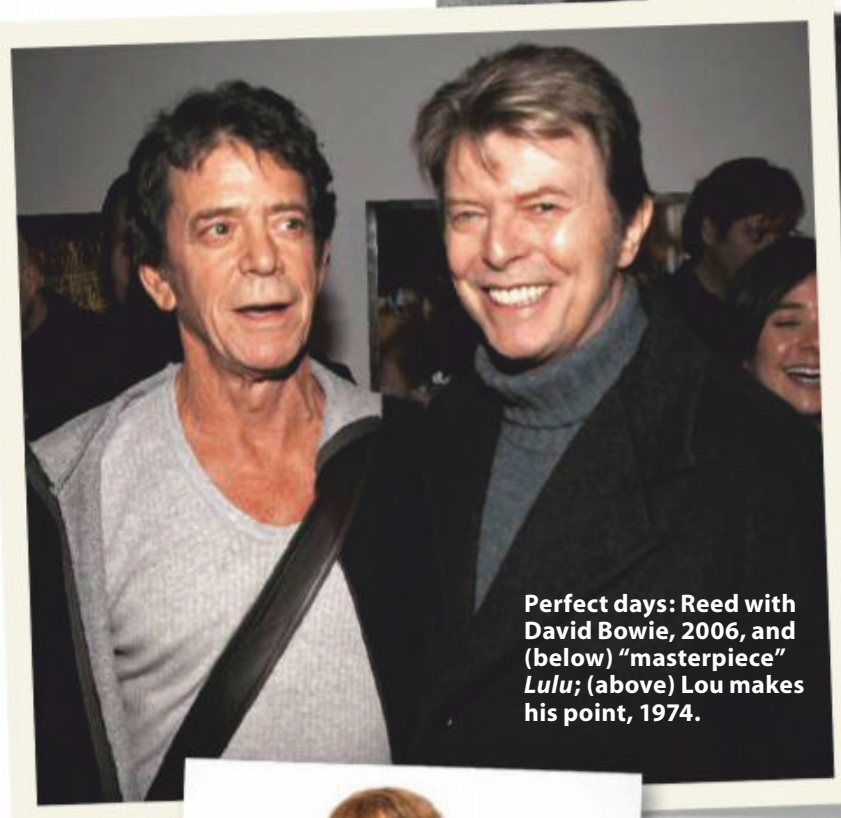
**Laurie Anderson**

a cruel line or spit out an intimate one. He could put audio "quotes" around words. He could make them shimmer and last for ever or drop them down at the end of the sentence, making them almost disappear.

He was always reinventing his own songs, looking for new ways to say them, to play them. I remember when Jimmy Scott taught Lou how to do vibrato. "Just go back and forth slowly between these two pitches," said Jimmy. Vibrato made the words last even longer and Lou loved this floating technique of singing.

Lou was the most vivid person I ever met. He was my other half – a magnet, a shining star, danger, a safe home, a mirror, love itself. And it's now that I can see why and how he wanted to write music about how to deal with disappearance, loss and grief. "I wished for a magical way to deal with grief and disappearance," he wrote. And especially when we began to meditate, this added whole new realms to the adventures:

*It must be nice to disappear*
*To have a vanishing act*
*To always be moving forward and*
*Never looking back*
[Vanishing Act, from *The Raven*, 2003]



**Perfect days: Reed with David Bowie, 2006, and (below) "masterpiece" *Lulu*; (above) Lou makes his point, 1974.**

AS I READ THE WORDS TO HIS SONGS now in many ways I have become a reader, another person who is looking at his pictures of couples, love and relationships. Often I find oddly familiar descriptions of our life together in some of his earliest songs.

After Lou died I was talking to David Bowie and saying how hard it was for me to read the violent lyrics of Lou's 2011 album with Metallica, *Lulu*. David made a big point of saying to me, "Listen, *Lulu* is Lou's greatest work. This is his masterpiece. Just wait, it will be like *Berlin*. It will take everyone a while to catch up." Recently I began reading the lyrics again. *Lulu* is so fierce. It's written by a man who understood fear and rage, abandonment, terror, revenge and love and wasn't afraid to express them. *Lulu* is an American King Lear.

Now sometimes in my own shows I perform Junior Dad, playing Lou's prerecorded voice and joining him on violin. "Scalding, my dead father has the motor and he's driving towards an island of lost souls," he sings. If I close my eyes it's like we're on some of the tours we did together playing each other's songs.

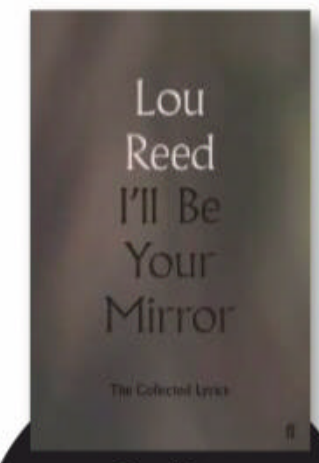
I've spent a lot of my life backstage waiting for my own shows to start and sometimes watching Lou's shows from the sidelines. In 2015 I used Turning Time Around in the credits for a film I made called Heart Of A Dog. Often at the end of screenings I would be backstage waiting to do the Q&A. "Turning time around, yes that is what love is," sang Lou. The sound was boomy and the words were muffled by the curtains and it almost always seemed like he was still on-stage finishing one of his shows and any minute he would appear and we'd go to the green room and then out to dinner to celebrate whatever there was to celebrate that day.

THE THING THAT NOW STRIKES ME most about Lou's words is their silence. They were born with accents and presented in whispers, shouts, moans and rants. Lou's deep voice is gone. The infectious grooves and all the beats are gone. The words rest on the page. They are like petrographs. Words without sound. Some of the remnants of melody survive in the patterns of the words as they scatter, dance and line themselves up across the page.

But suddenly you can read them at your own rate. You can take your own time, make your own song, create your own verse/chorus. The words have been set free. They have a new strange and stranded beauty, open for you to read in your own way.

My favourite song is one he wrote for me – The Power Of The Heart – and now I sing it to myself any way I feel like:

*You know me, I like to dream a lot*
*Of what there is and what there's not*
*But mainly I dream of you a lot*
*The power of your heart*
*The power of your heart*




**To order I'll Be Your Mirror with a 20% discount visit https://www.faber.co.uk/shop.html/ from November 7 and enter promo code MOJO20 at the checkout.**

*Laurie Anderson, 2019. Taken from I'll Be Your Mirror: The Collected Lyrics, By Lou Reed, published by Faber & Faber on November 7.*

Getty, Gesine Petter/Fotex

**The beast within: R.E.M. feed their spirit animal on the Monster Tour, Sydney, January 1995 (from left) Bill Berry, Mike Mills, Michael Stipe, Peter Buck.**

# R.E.M. UNLEASH THEIR MONSTER

**The Georgia cults had hit huge and gone international with 1991's *Out Of Time* and 1992's *Automatic For The People*. Then in 1994, Berry, Buck, Mills and Stipe hatched a new plan: that their next album would rock louder, crackle with distortion and lay bare the insanity of fame. Along the way there were births, deaths, sexual fluidity, Nudie suits and a lot of confused fans. "People were outside every hotel room, screaming and grabbing at us," they say, "but we survived everything that got thrown at us."**

Interviews by **MARTIN ASTON** • Portrait by **TOM SHEEHAN**

**Peter Buck:** We'd released *Out Of Time* and *Automatic For The People* and had huge success, but we hadn't toured in five years and we'd spent a lot of time apart. When we met up eight months after *Automatic*, we found we were all looking forward to being on the road, so we started writing material in that direction.

**Michael Stipe:** We all wanted to tour: [drummer] Bill Berry demanded it. The last two records were very slow and meditative so we set out to create a record that was much louder and brasher, a record that turned out to combine rock and irony, taking distance from the medium. Another jumping-off point was glam, which had inspired my predecessors and had been introduced to me through punk rock.

Tom Sheehan

New frequencies: Peter Buck and (left) Scott McCaughey catch the winds of change, Omni Coliseum, Atlanta, November 11, 1995; (right) Michael Stipe and (below) Mike Mills see the lights, McAlpine Stadium, Huddersfield, July 25, 1995.

## "THE TOUR WAS MAYHEM... OUR DRUMMER ALMOST DIED FROM A BRAIN ANEURYSM ON-STAGE IN SWITZERLAND."

**Peter Buck**

**Mike Mills:** Were we all on the same page? Nobody voiced opinions otherwise. We enjoyed moving in different directions. *Automatic* was a beautiful, haunting record but the themes were mortality and death and considering your relationship to those things. We wanted something more playful and aggressive. Peter had also rediscovered the joy of electric guitar.

**PB:** I'd moved to Seattle, and hearing a lot of loud guitar was a big part of it for me. We weren't trying to alienate anyone, but great bands don't follow rigid schedules. This was the record we wanted to make, and it pushed us forward.

**Scott Litt:** I said, "Let's not record this in a studio, let's bring the gear into a rehearsal space, let's stand up and play as opposed to sitting down," which set the tone. *Monster* was very much driven by one of Peter's favourite amps, the Vox AC30, which has tremolo and vibrato settings, and they added effects like reverb and delay. The drums played to the guitar on *Monster* rather than, as usual, everything plays to the drums.

**PB:** A sound stage in Atlanta with a PA and monitors is very different to wearing headphones in a studio where the speakers are in another room. We recorded 15 songs like it was a live performance, and that was the start point. We junked a lot of songs, like Until The Day Is Done, which ended up on *Accelerate*. If the demos [part of the new *Monster* box set] sounded like an old-style R.E.M. record, that'll tell you why we didn't want to go back there.

**SL:** The recording was fraught, from the first day in Atlanta when Mike had an intestinal disorder and was hospitalised. So much was happening in that period, people hurting and dying, it seemed like it was all cascading, which added to the time it took to make the record, and the stress.

**MM:** Because *Monster* was a new direction for us, the recording process was more complicated, plus we stopped and started in different studios, when it's easy to lose focus and momentum.

**PB:** As things progressed, I realised Michael was writing in character. I got the feeling a lot of lyrics were reactions to how our world had changed in the previous four years, to the weirdness and paranoia we'd experienced. We'd been a pretty large band but still a little under the radar. Then we started selling millions and things had got weird.

**MM:** Michael is the frontman and lyricist, so everyone is looking to get into his psyche, because he writes words that speak to fans, and therefore he might understand them. Michael was also having issues with the loss of close personal friends, River Phoenix and Kurt Cobain [who died in October 1993 and April 1994 respectively], which made writing very difficult for him. Something that serious makes you reassess stuff, which isn't good in the middle of a record.

**PB:** My wife was about to give birth, so I'd taken a few weeks off. I could see Kurt's house from my backyard [in Seattle], and people taking pictures of the house. It was emotionally very tough. We were younger then and hadn't experienced many deaths, and none as dramatic. I wonder now if that fed in to *Monster*. My guitar has a more angular and threatening sound – I wasn't looking for anything beautiful on *Monster* – and with the effects on Michael's voice, it's sounded claustrophobic. I think it had to do with disguising who we were, like putting on a mask.

**MS:** Enough ink has been spilled about those times. There isn't much more to say about River and Kurt. If I said at the time that I had writer's block, I'm sure I did, but I don't really remember.

**SL:** I don't think it was writer's block as much as Michael being bored with the structure of the songs. Peter has a straightforward approach to songwriting, he writes chords to give to Michael, like eight bars in G and four in D, then the bridge, which made it difficult for Michael to put in feelings of vulnerability. He's being presented with tracks that didn't represent him, which is where Tongue and Let Me In – which was about Kurt – were added toward the end.

**Bertis Downs:** It was a fragile, fraught time. Peter had new twins and would have thought of the need to be a dad at the same time as finishing a record, with a deadline because of the tour.

**SL:** By the time we got to mixing *Monster*, we were exhausted. Grunge was still in the air, and I got carried away with the effects, heaping them up like an abstract painting, including Michael's vocals, which should have got more space. *Monster* should have sounded more like *Document* [1987], an instrumental rock trio forging ahead and Michael above. I've been waiting for an anniversary so I could take another shot, which I have for the new box set.

**MS:** Had it been four other people, *Monster* might have ended up somewhere in the middle, but we tend toward extremes. There are a few clunkers I'd change, like King Of Comedy, [but] Tongue was one of the ballsiest things I ever did, an unbelievably sad and beautiful narrative.

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

● Michael Stipe (singer)

● Peter Buck (guitar)

● Mike Mills (bass)

● Scott McCaughey (tour guitar)

● Scott Litt (producer)

● Bertis Downs (lawyer/adviser)

**Kings of comedy: (clockwise from main) Buck, Mills, Stipe and Berry on a field trip, Dublin, 1994; Stipe and Courtney Love, 1994 MTV Awards; fans enjoy the tour programme, Waldbühne, Berlin, June 28, 1995.**

**MM:** *Monster* was a heavily returned record. We knew the exponential increase in fans from [1988 album] *Green* through to *Automatic* was because of the hit singles, and they're the ones who want to hear the same thing again, so we knew we'd shed a lot of them.

**MS:** After our two most successful records, we were at the top of our game and I could do anything we wanted, and I took full advantage. *Monster* touched on love and desire, and at that point it was an important time to talk about my sexuality, that I had enjoyed sex with men and women. And, of course, there was a massive backlash. We're in the 21st century, where things are much less binary than in the early '90s – when, of my generation, only Boy George and k.d. lang had been public about being queer, or whatever term they applied to themselves. What I presented was more nuanced than what people expected.

**MM:** I don't believe a substantial percentage of listeners were put off by any suggestion of queerness or bisexuality on *Monster*. If anyone was, they can piss off and listen to anyone else. The fans who were with us for a great deal of our journey are well aware that sexual fluidity is a part of being human.

**Scott McCaughey:** It was a big deal for me to be asked to join R.E.M. for the tour, so I got to know *Monster* intimately. With a clear conscience, I can say I still love it. They were never anything less than excited about the record, but in hindsight, they've talked *Monster* down a little, perhaps because of the returned copies, or the memory of making it, or the critical consensus, which wasn't all that great.

**PB:** The tour was mayhem and intense. Our drummer [Bill Berry] almost died from a brain aneurysm on-stage in Switzerland [on March 1, 1995 in Lausanne], then Mike had surgery [for an intestinal adhesion], and a month later, Michael [for a hernia]. People were outside every hotel room, screaming and grabbing at us, which didn't make sense: we'd been around for 15 years by that point! I was glad that we had reached people but it wasn't where I wanted to be in my life.

**BD:** In the five years since they'd toured, the world of touring had changed, in terms of personnel and staging, and Ticketmaster. We didn't go as far as Pearl Jam, but we were aware of scalping and secondary sales, which meant hardcore fans would get shut out. Playing smaller places would have meant driving prices up further, and staying awhile in any one place to meet demand would make a long tour even longer. But we only really played stadiums in Europe in the summer. Most shows were arenas.

**MM:** Even I don't always watch the bassist at shows, so I wanted to give the people something to look at and enjoy. My suits were made by Manuel, who was Nudie's tailor for years. I'd loved those suits from seeing Porter Wagoner and Gram Parsons, and it took some cojones to wear them. The suits fitted in with *Monster*, about a persona that you may or may not be, about shedding old skin for new skin, and it was consistent with not giving a damn what people thought. I was there to enjoy myself.

**PB:** We survived everything that got thrown at us, plus we wrote and recorded most of a new record on the road, and *New Adventures In Hi-Fi* [1996] is one of my favourite R.E.M. albums. There was a lot of looking forward and not getting stuck in a record-tour-record cycle.

**SM:** After Bill's surgery and everything put on hold, we weren't even sure if he would make it back. The fact he did so quickly was amazing, and it made us appreciate things all the more. Making a record on tour was Peter's genius idea. We didn't need to soundcheck the same songs, so every day was new. It went back to R.E.M.'s early days, Michael singing whatever he came up with, and playing together every day.

**MS:** It was remarkable what we pulled off despite the headlines about illness and being cursed. We presented a different version of ourselves, and led to what was, for a longest time, my favourite R.E.M. record, *New Adventures*, which only happened because of how brash we'd been with *Monster*. I'd wilfully allowed mystery to be part of who we were during our first decade, but by *Out Of Time*, the world knew us, so let's try something different. Moving from smaller rooms to stadiums required a much bigger presentation and personality, and I was willing to try that on. I was buoyed by a younger generation like Nirvana, Hole and Sonic Youth, and the bold choices they'd made, so we fucking went for it. Feet first. Damn the torpedoes. Ⓜ

*Various 25th anniversary editions of Monster will be released on November 1 on Craft Recordings.*

Tom Sheehan (4), Getty (6), Shutterstock, Csaba Schumy/Shutterstock

# "I CREATED THIS PERSONA WHO WAS, TO A DEGREE, Myself"

**FOR DECADES, BLONDIE'S DEBBIE HARRY SAW VERSIONS OF HERSELF REFLECTED IN THE MIRRORS OF THE MEDIA AND HER AUDIENCE. TELLING HER OWN VERSION OF HER STORY – INCLUDING THE HEROIN, CHRIS STEIN'S ILLNESS AND DAVID BOWIE'S PENIS-FLASHING – WAS AN ORDEAL THAT MADE HER RETCH, BUT SHE'S COME THROUGH IT WITH "CLARITY" ENHANCED. "I KNOW I WAS LUCKY," SHE TELLS DAVID FRICKE. "AND I STILL AM."**

DEBORAH HARRY WALKS INTO THE ROOM AS IF LITTLE HAS changed since 1976. It is a typical mid-summer day in New York City, gruesomely hot and sultry, and the production office at SIR Studios is a tiny, claustrophobic mess. But the singer and defining face of Blondie takes a seat with cool, natural glamour: at once playfully girlish and regally minimalist, dressed entirely in queen-of-the-night black except for a shocking-pink baseball cap. Harry is partly hiding behind large, tinted sunglasses, and her namesake hair is now a more sandy shade of sunlight. But whenever a smile spreads across her broad, distinctive features or her eyes light up with challenge, the effect is immediate and familiar. Just turned 74, Harry is still a beautiful and commanding presence – with a deep seasoning of age and experience.

She has just come out of a rehearsal down the hall with the current line-up of Blondie, still anchored by Harry, guitarist Chris Stein – her co-founder and ex-partner – and drummer Clem Burke. The Bowery-born punk institution – which broke up in 1982 after five years as CBGB's biggest international success story and is more than two decades into a second era of touring and recording – is about to go on the road with Elvis Costello And The Imposters. One of the first shows is in Forest Hills, Queens – strolling distance from where Harry's old friends, the four original Ramones, grew up. ➢

**Touched by her presence: Debbie Harry in 1978 as Blondie break into charts around the world, photographed by Mick Rock and (below) as interpreted by a fan and seen in Harry's memoir Face It. For more fans' eye views, turn to page 70.**

©Mick Rock

**Picture these: Blondie 1978 (standing, from left) Jimmy Destri, Harry, Chris Stein, Clem Burke, (front) Nigel Harrison, Frank Infante; (left, clockwise from top left) the young Debbie; in Wind In The Willows, 1968; Stein gets serious; with Joey Ramone; (insets) debut single and early interview; (opposite) Harry cuts in short; Joan Jett gets an autograph; (insets) the band's US smash LP; a fourth US Number 1 single.**

◀ "Those boys – I can't believe they're all gone," she says wistfully. "It brings tears to my eyes." Harry pauses, her thoughts turning to another lost soul from Blondie's scuffling years. "Chris and I have a saying – we wonder what Johnny Thunders would be doing now, what kind of songs he would be writing."

In fact, Harry is here to talk about something she has just written: her autobiography. Based on interviews with MOJO's Sylvie Simmons with additional essays by the singer, Face It is Harry's long dive back into a wildly colourful life of extremes – adolescent hippy adventure; hard-won pop celebrity; the eternal battle to be taken seriously as a woman in an oppressively male circus – that she often found physically painful to revisit. "It wasn't like I was jumping for joy," Harry confesses. "There were times when I would go, 'Do I *have* to?'" She makes a retching sound as if sick to her stomach. "It took a couple of years to drag it out of me."

But revelation comes right away as Harry opens with the extraordinary circumstances of her birth – in Miami as Angela Trimble on July 1, 1945 – and her adoption by a New Jersey couple, Richard and Cathy Harry. Drawing on long-sealed records, the singer's reconstruction of her birth parents' saga – lovestruck teens separated by the girl's parents; a reunion years later, a surprise pregnancy and final separation – rolls like a late-'70s Bruce Springsteen ballad. Escaping placid middle-class life for New York in the mid-'60s, Harry takes LSD for the first time in the company of Timothy Leary; serves the famous as a waitress at Max's Kansas City; and attends Woodstock with a close friend from childhood, the singer Melanie.

There is forensic examination of Blondie's chaotic origins, the road to fame and cornerstone singles such as X Offender, the group's bracing pop-noir debut in 1976, and 1981's Rapture, the first US Number 1 with rap vocals. Harry is also candid about her extended dalliance with heroin and the difficult years following Blondie's bitter collapse, including her time caring for Stein after their split as he fought pemphigus vulgaris, an autoimmune disease. Face It is lavishly illustrated but not in the way you expect; Harry liberally shares full-colour reproductions of the fan art she has collected on tour going back to the '70s.

"At first, I was sort of horrified, how people started giving me these drawings," she explains. "Yet I couldn't throw them away. I would stick them in my suitcase. And I started appreciating how people were showing me a piece of themselves. Many of the things aren't signed. But I always feel there is something of the person who did it in there for me to look at.

"Because I really don't need to look at myself," Harry adds quickly. "I look at myself entirely too often."

**The story of your birth and adoption is poignantly detailed. What was it like to learn so much about your birth parents after so long?**

I knew a certain amount from my [adopted] mother. And I was always curious. But I never wanted to upset my [adopted] family, to make them think I didn't love them. Today, adopted children are encouraged to look up their birth parents – to know who they are, where they are; to put the pieces together. In 2017, I was allowed legal access to the adoption agency's records. Even then, it took a while because the records were handwritten, and they had to get it into their computers.

But I always realised how privileged I was. My adopted family – we didn't have a lot of money. But it was peaceful; I felt protected. That's the thing about adoption – that separation from the mother. It is completely horrifying. You have no language, no skills for survival. I had a great fucking life. I know that anything could have happened to me when I was put up for adoption. And I was given all of this.

**When did you realise you were attractive – and the value in that?**

From my point of view, it was another lucky break. Why wouldn't I enjoy being noticed and appreciated for it? It's coin of the realm, and it takes a while to understand it. I was very shy. When I was at the awkward age, I did not think that I was pretty. I still have days like that (*holds a hand to her face as if to hide*). If anything, this book is a story about evolving and being the person that you want to be, not just what people see. Then when you find out what that is, you are

Courtesy of the Harry Family, Chris Stein, Getty (5)

# "I HAD A GREAT FUCKING LIFE. I KNOW THAT ANYTHING COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO ME WHEN I WAS PUT UP FOR ADOPTION."

## BLONDIE IS A GROUP!

willing to express it. And I always wanted to be an artist. I never had any doubt in my mind whatsoever.

**In the book, you recall attending two New York shows in the '60s that left a mark on you: The Velvet Underground With Nico and Janis Joplin with Big Brother And The Holding Company. Those women were polar opposities in looks and sexual authority on-stage. What did you see and admire in them?**

The fact that they were doing it. At that point in my life, I was inspired by that – and terrified by it. We all have different sides to our personalities. Janis could bowl you over. But when you see somebody so strong like that, you realise there is another side in there that is so tiny, sweet and vulnerable. I served her a steak at Max's once. I was working the table where she was sitting. But she didn't eat it. I wrapped up her steak and took it home.

**You're frank in the book about your extended experience with heroin, which started in the '60s. You also mention that you took heroin in part to cope with depression.**

Sure – self-medication. Most people turn to some kind of alternative state of mind. I remember one of the maître d's at Max's – I was going, "I'm so tired," and he goes, "Here." And all of a sudden, "Oh, that was great." Let's face it – that was an era when not much was known about it. It wasn't talked about the way it is now. I'm mainly shocked about what's going on now with those pills [opioids]. My God, in this day and age when everybody knows everything, what the fuck are you doing?

**Was drug use a way for you to deal with the pressures of being in Blondie?**

I didn't do it that much when I was working. When I was with Blondie, doing music, I was fine – nothing. When I wasn't working… (*affects look of distressed exhaustion*). I stopped years and years ago, in the '80s. So here I am. I learned my lesson. I loved it, I hated it – all of the above. How many people that I loved and valued are dead because of drugs? You live and learn. And if you're lucky, you live.

"BLONDIE WAS A STREET NAME I got from truck drivers – they all yell, 'Hey, Blondie!'" Harry recalled in her first-ever cover story – in May 1976 in the third-ever issue of New York Rocker. "Now," she added, "all the bums on the Bowery yell, 'Hey, Blondie!'"

Harry was already bleaching her hair – originally closer to chestnut-brown – to a platinum extreme when she was 14, inspired by the charisma and vulnerability of another former brunette, Marilyn Monroe. "Some people don't respect blondes, especially bleached blonde," Harry told MOJO in 2005. "But for me, it was a real internal shift. I loved the whole idea of dangerous innocence." At one point in Blondie's early days, gigging on bills in the Bowery with the Ramones and Talking Heads, Harry tried to convince the guys in her band to bleach their hair as well. The idea went nowhere.

Harry and Stein, five years her junior, first met in 1973. She was a singer in The Stilettoes, a trashy pop-art spin on '60s girl groups; Stein had joined their backing band. He and Harry were soon a couple, starting Blondie in 1974. The New York scene was so small and casually incestuous that Fred Smith, later of Television, was Blondie's first bassist. In Face It, Harry notes that Clem Burke auditioned for Patti Smith's band on the same day he answered Blondie's Village Voice ad for a "freak energy rock drummer".

In that New York Rocker interview, published three months before Blondie went into the studio to record their self-titled first LP, Harry said the band was "struggling to get a sound and a style". But she had her vision. "Rock'n'roll is a real masculine business, and I think it's time girls did something in it," Harry said, citing Joplin's inspiration. "But she had to sacrifice herself. Every time she went on stage, she had to bleed for the audience. I don't feel I have to sacrifice myself.

"The strongest art comes from the strongest people," Harry declared. "I didn't think I was strong enough at one time, but I do now."

**How much was Blondie – as a name and character – a burden? It was something the rest of the band couldn't share.**

I had worked with [underground theatre actor and director] Tony Ingrassia when I was in The Stilettoes. He was into Method acting, and that taught me a lot. It eased me through a certain amount of inner shyness. I got to the point where I had created this persona who was, to a ➢

# Here's Looking At You

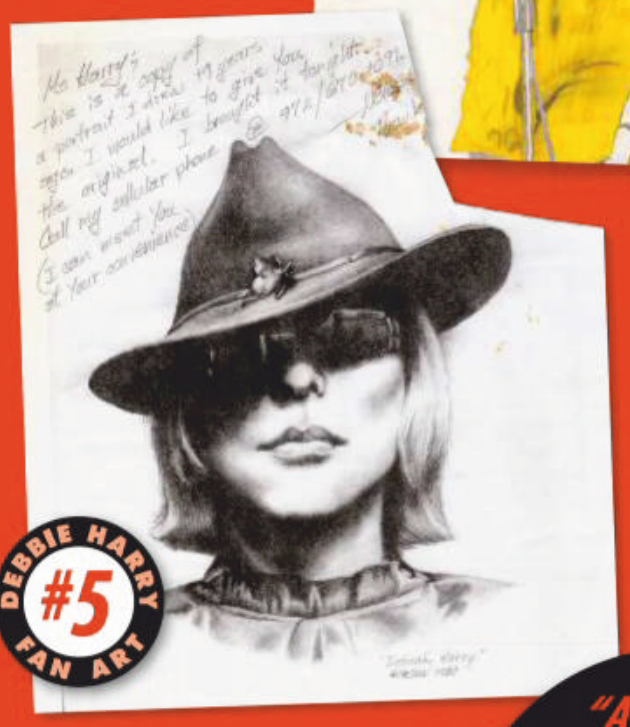
## DEBBIE HARRY HOW HER FANS SEE HER. WARNING: SOMETIMES IT'S SCARY.

**DEBBIE IS:** A coy but perilous vamp
**CATALOGUE NOTE:** Some good technique here. Background is interestingly textured, and there's lots of character in the subject's attitude. If only it looked more like Debbie Harry.

**DEBBIE IS:** A Cubist fantasy
**CATALOGUE NOTE:** There's a vivid 'outsider art' aspect to this portrait, with Harry reduced to formal elements of hair, mouth and, of course, eyes – which, slightly unsettlingly, follow you around the room. MOJO's favourite, by a short head.

**DEBBIE IS:** A cheesecake fetish item
**CATALOGUE NOTE:** A knowing pastiche in the softcore style of more innocent times. Although the shadowing around the eyes suggests something of the Undead. Hmmm.

**DEBBIE IS:** An angry sunflower
**CATALOGUE NOTE:** Vivid and enthusiastic use of the colour yellow; the fingers on the left hand (never easy – ask Matt Groening) are well-rendered; head slightly over-large; eyes a little over-small. Overall assessment: 'eye-catching'.




**DEBBIE IS:** A mystery boy/girl scout
**CATALOGUE NOTE:** Painstaking pencil work on this one – copied from a photo, as most of Harry's fan portraits seem to be. The artist offers to meet Harry "at Your convenience" Security!

**DEBBIE IS:** A GCSE pop art project
**CATALOGUE NOTE:** An unambitious but nonetheless eye- pleasing rendition that scores by being the most obviously Debbie Harry-like of our Debbie Harrys. GCSE grade: a maybe generous 7.

**DEBBIE IS:** A trailer park ice queen
**CATALOGUE NOTE:** The stormy, forbidding background; the slightly mad eyes with their cold, challenging stare and the stern, pinched mouth: you wouldn't want to meet *this* Debbie Harry on a dark night. Great hair though!

**"AT FIRST, I WAS SORT OF HORRIFIED, HOW PEOPLE STARTED GIVING ME THESE DRAWINGS. YET I COULDN'T THROW THEM AWAY."**

certain degree, myself. But I could grow and evolve in it. Blondie is a character, and I've always enjoyed that aspect of it. And singing the guys' lyrics – I don't know how successful it was, but I was trying to make it obvious that it was a bisexual thing. These were songs that a man or woman could sing.

**You have also traced a lot of your Blondie character to Monroe, who was valued for her beauty and sexuality but not taken seriously for much else – "the good old double standard" as your book puts it.**

That's life, isn't it? How much time should I actually waste on that, worrying about it? I concentrate on singing well, writing things I feel proud of. I guess I've learned not to go there, to keep working on the assignment. When I started in bands, there weren't that many girls, and it was a hard sell – not only with record companies and the business world, but with other musicians. So I was lucky. I *know* I was lucky. And I still am.

**There is one startling moment in the book when you recall an incident on Blondie's 1977 tour with Iggy Pop, when David Bowie was in his band. You were sharing some coke with them when Bowie pulled out his manhood, exposing himself to you.**

David was famous for that – well, fairly famous (*grins*).

**You call the incident "funny, adorable, sexy". It would not be seen that way today.**

Maybe I was on a tour bus with guys for too long, I don't know. If somebody is physically aggressive to you, assaulting you, that is one story. If somebody whips out his penis, you can walk away. Just say, "Ugh! See ya, not for me." There have been times when I have been humiliated and annoyed, frustrated and angry by that kind of treatment. But there are other times when you just say, "Oh, *pl-eeeeze*."

**There was that famous tag line in a lot of the early Blondie ads and promotion: "Blondie is a group."**

Our manager came up with that.

**As well as being the visual and vocal focus in the band, you were in a serious relationship with Chris. How did that affect the band's day-to-day dynamics as Blondie got bigger?**

Chris and I had a great relationship. We would talk about things. We talked and talked and talked. Many people don't do that, and the relationship suffers. But it's not easy being in a group. You go, "I want to do my thing." Or, "I want to do your thing my way." But sometimes you give. You have to pull back. I think bands break up because they can't back off.

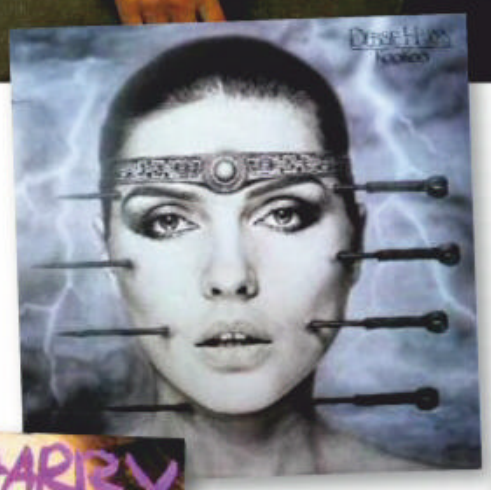
Chris and I had an appreciation of everyone's creativity and wanted that to be a part of the group's dynamic and identity. Only years later did we realise it's completely foolish (*laughs*).

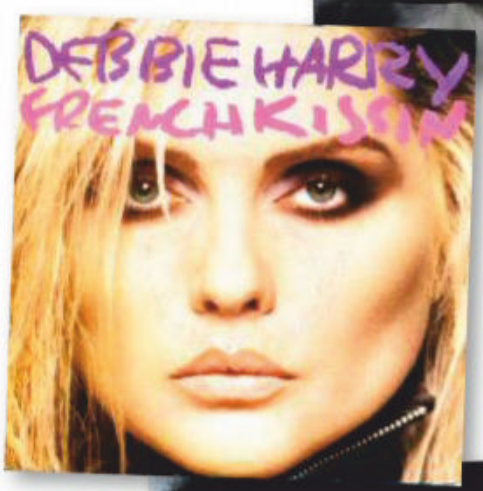
It is not the most efficient way of creating product or to be in the music business. But we did it. We had songs from everybody in the band. I guess we fell for the story of the early bands, that it was some kind of alternative family. Basically, Chris and I were old hippies. That was our ideal and it worked to some degree – for a long time, to a point. And then it didn't work any more.

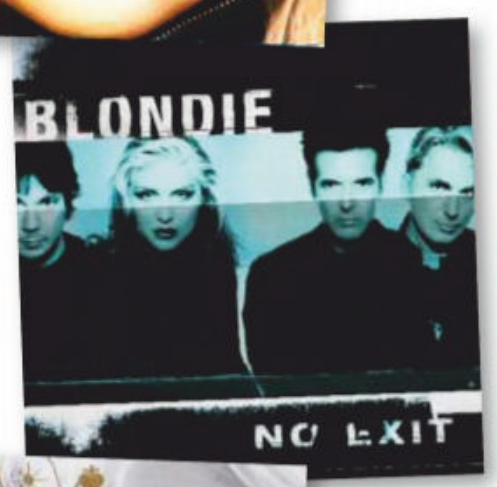
HARRY DEDICATES FACE IT to "The Girls of the Underworld." "I was thinking of the girls from CBGB," she says, "the musi-

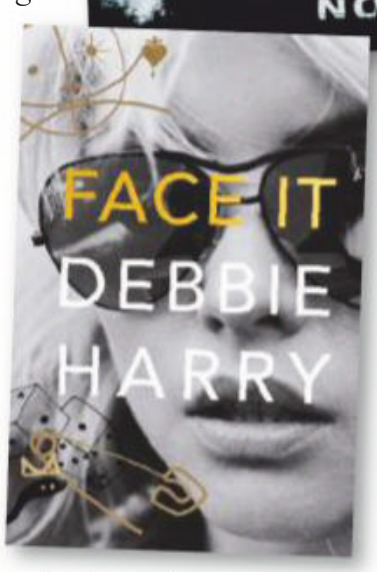
**Fairly famous: Debbie and David Bowie reminisce about hanging out, Manchester 2003; (right) Stein, Harry and Clem Burke in Beverly Hills, May 2019; (insets, from top) solo records in the '80s, 1999 comeback LP, the memoir.**

**"HOW MANY PEOPLE THAT I LOVED AND VALUED ARE DEAD BECAUSE OF DRUGS? YOU LIVE AND LEARN. AND IF YOU'RE LUCKY, YOU LIVE."**





cians and people I knew like Cherry Vanilla, Helen Wheels, Wendy O. Williams [of The Plasmatics], Annie Golden [of The Shirts]. There weren't that many women around. But it didn't feel like competition. We were so different." Harry stiffens slightly when reminded of the club's infamously grotty bathroom and the lack of any private dressing space for the women who performed there. "I knew what it was," she states flatly. "I knew what I wanted to do, and that was that."

And Harry didn't quit even as Blondie fell apart and her relationship with Stein ended. (They broke up on the same day, in February 1987, that their friend and fan Andy Warhol died. She has never married.) Harry's 1981 solo debut, *KooKoo* – produced by Chic's Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards – was notorious for H.R. Giger's cover art, a violent about-face from Harry's Blondie image in which he portrayed the star as a metallic automaton with skewers running through her cheeks. The LP was also a Top 10 UK hit, as was the 1986 single French Kissin' In The USA.

Outside of Blondie, who returned in 1999 with *No Exit*, Harry has worked with Nick Cave and Franz Ferdinand and joined Arcade Fire on-stage at the 2014 Coachella festival. In 2015, she had a two-week residency, singing only solo material, at the Café Carlyle, a legendary New York cabaret room. "She's the rare older pop artist who doesn't need to legitimise herself with acknowledged classics," a critic from The New Yorker wrote. "Harry could do a whole jazz show, easy, and you'd dig it."

At SIR, asked what she hoped to achieve with the memoir, Harry simply answers, "Clarity. In that, it was a really emotional experience. Compared to today's standards, where you're reading everything about everybody as soon as it happens, I am too private perhaps. But I come from the era when you would ferment – let things come in. I'm not going to give it all away, right away. It's going to ferment, for good or bad."

**Were there any particular issues or misconceptions that you wanted to clear up in Face It?**

I don't want to complain about the British press because they have been extremely good to Blondie. But for a while, they were really harping on the idea that I was Chris's Florence Nightingale [during his illness]. That was so incorrect, so soap opera. I couldn't deal with it. And no matter how many times I said it, it just had a life of its own.

I just thought it seemed like the normal thing to do. If you're with a loved one – a parent, a child, a lover or husband – that's what *most* of us do. We step up.

**You make an example of the BBC DJ Johnnie Walker, who hammered you on that subject. [In a 2017 interview, Walker accused Harry of breaking up with Stein during his illness – "And then you walked out on him."] It sounds like you're still pissed off.**

I thought I should mention him because he was such a pig. I haven't really torn anybody a new asshole except him. There was no reason for him to make that assumption. And to say it twice – clearly he was trying to stick it in, give it a twist and get a rise out of me. It was pretty silly.

**You write near the end of Face It, "I've had one fucking interesting life, and I intend to go on having one." At this point, how does touring with Blondie, singing those songs again, fit into your idea of a future – of continuing to grow as you get older?**

It is based on not being an oldies band. We are doing new material, making new records. I love what we're doing, and I think it's about 50/50 in the audiences. People are coming to hear the songs they know and love. Others are coming because they see the bigger picture.

I don't want to sit around, talking about the old days. That's not me. I have curiosity. It's led me into some weird circumstances – and some great ones. I want to know things. I'm not the kind of person that gets all intense and crazy – "We gotta do this, we gotta go there, right now!" But if someone says, "Hey, do you want to go hang gliding?" I'm like, "Gee, I've never done that. I don't know if I can. But I like the idea of soaring."

getty (2)

**"Mother nature on the run": Neil Young at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, March 28, 1970, the year the phrase was coined on *After The Gold Rush*.**

18+

# WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

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# RIDER ON THE STORM

**FROM HIS NEW HIGH-ALTITUDE HOME IN THE COLORADO ROCKIES, NEIL YOUNG IS PLOTTING HIS LATEST DEFENCE OF PLANET EARTH. AND BACK IN THE SADDLE ARE CRAZY HORSE, CELEBRATING 50 YEARS AS ROCK'N'ROLL'S LOYALLEST, MOST ELEMENTAL BACKING BAND. WITH YOUNG'S HELP, TOM DOYLE RELIVES THAT FRACTIOUS HALF-CENTURY, AND CHECKS THE STATE OF THE BROADER SHAKEYVERSE: THE LOST ALBUMS PENDING; THE ONGOING WAR ON "DUNCES"; THE HERBAL HABITS REVIVED… "I WOULD SAY THAT I'M BACK," YOUNG SAYS. "I DON'T WANNA SEE THAT WEED GET WASTED."**

**LIVE PORTRAITS BY HENRY DILTZ.**

Henry Diltz (3)

HIGH IN THE COLORADO Rockies, almost two miles above sea level, lies the Studio In The Clouds. It was here in the San Juan Mountains, near the old goldrush town of Telluride, that Neil Young and Crazy Horse came in April to make their first album together in seven years. The last, bumpy part of the journey, along an ascending dirt road, taxed the vintage equipment – some of it half-a-century old – that had undergone the 800-mile trip from its storage place in Los Angeles. Not so much, though, its 73-year-old owner.

"Well, y'know, I live in Colorado," Young points out, in characteristically laidback fashion. "So, it's easy for me to get to Colorado."

He laughs. Young's breezy manner, however, belies the dramatic circumstances surrounding his recent move from California to the inner western state. In a concrete manifestation of the eco-fear that has increasingly become a central feature of his lyrics, climate change arrived at Neil Young's front door last November, and burned it down. His Malibu home was destroyed by the Californian wildfire that he put down to record temperatures caused by extreme weather patterns. "Lots of things of importance to me personally were lost," he laments now. "But none of my instruments were in there. A lot of old furniture that I've had for 50 years was in there. A lot of great stuff that I really miss.

"Hell of a time to be alive," he adds with a sigh. "I wouldn't wish what's gonna happen on my grandchildren, and even my children. I'll probably be here long enough to see the very beginning of the devastation… unless we do something to change it."

The threat of environmental calamities aside, life on a Colorado ranch, where Neil Young talks to MOJO, seems to suit him. The sudden change in location hasn't slowed his productivity, either. In shaking up his old routines and bringing the reunited Crazy Horse up into the mountains (rather than to a Californian recording studio), Young continues to add fresh perspective to a long-established blueprint.

Matt Furman/Redux/Eyevine, Getty, courtesy of Daryl Hannah

As we will discover, he has also re-established his on/off relationship with his beloved marijuana, minus its unwanted side effects of indolence or procrastination. The new Neil Young/Crazy Horse record, simply titled *Colorado*, is the latest step in a career that is all about forward motion, but also careful curation of his back catalogue. 2020 will finally see the release of *Homegrown*, the unheard acoustic album Young shelved in 1975 in favour of *Tonight's The Night*; the long-gestated *Archives Volume 2* box set; and a live album/concert film, *Alchemy*, capturing Crazy Horse in 2012-13 touring their previous LP together, the tripped-out, grungy *Psychedelic Pill*.

*Colorado*, meanwhile, was nailed within a fortnight, its initial sessions timed, as ever, at Young's insistence, to coincide with the appearance of a full moon. "We target the full moon as a time of extreme energy and growth," he says, brightly. "A good time to plant things. This is knowledge that's been around for centuries. The modern world has not been able to change it."

For the singer, the word 'Colorado' evokes "colours… it's to do with a reddish hue on things." But for a time, the working title of *Colorado* was *Pink Moon*. Presumably he was aware of the Nick Drake album of the same name?

"No, no, I wasn't. Also, it doesn't matter to me. Y'know, when I did the album *On The Beach*, there was a movie called On The Beach that came out before that [a 1959 adaptation of Nevil Shute's 1957 novel], but it didn't bother me. I just figure out what I wanna call it and if that's what I wanna call it, that's what I call it. 'Cos, y'know, I don't care," he adds with a chuckle. "That's the difference."

In this respect, his message is the same as it ever was: he's Neil Young and he'll do whatever the hell he wants…

"Everybody can do what they like," he sagely reasons, before breaking into deep laughter. "They should!"

MAKING MUSIC IN THIN AIR IS ALL IN A DAY'S WORK for Crazy Horse. For 50 years now, since 1969's *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere*, the band have been following their leader's mercurial cues and directions. But not all of its members would make this latest leg of their decades-long odyssey, with Frank 'Poncho' Sampedro, the Horse's rhythm guitarist since 1975's *Zuma* album, unable to join them.

"He has some arthritis problems," Young explains. "Especially after the accident we had on the road in Europe." In 2013, travelling between Oslo and Gothenburg, Sampedro jammed his fingers in the band's tour bus door. "Hand got crushed," confirms Young. "Y'know, some things have happened and they make it so it wasn't as easy for him."

Enter Nils Lofgren – veteran of various Young line-ups since 1970's *After The Gold Rush* – in place of Sampedro. Upon his arrival in Telluride, the guitarist found a gift from Young waiting for him in his hotel room. "This giant oxygen tank," Lofgren laughs, "with instructions how to use it."

What hasn't changed about Crazy Horse is their unfussy, live-in-the-room approach to recording: what Young likes to call "audio vérité". "It's a documentation of something that happened," he stresses, "as opposed to building a piece of music."

Wherever he creatively roams, Neil Young always seems to find his way back to Crazy Horse. His ongoing dedication to the loose, intuitive, time-served band – built on the sometimes-precarious rhythmic support of drummer Ralph Molina and bassist Billy Talbot – underscores Young's commitment to rawness and spontaneity. "Everything about Crazy Horse is soulful," he says. "That's what it's about. I

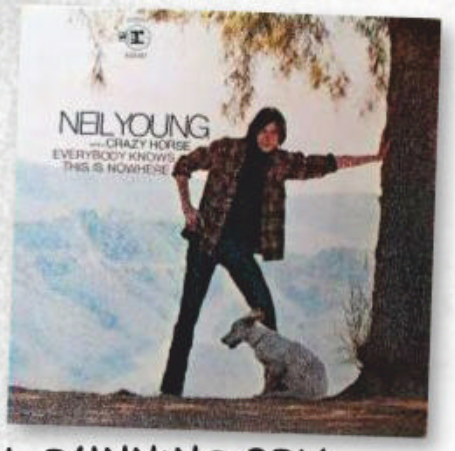
*Continues on page 78*

**"EVERYTHING ABOUT CRAZY HORSE IS SOULFUL. I DON'T GET THAT FROM *ANYBODY* ELSE: CSNY, ANY BAND I'VE EVER PLAYED WITH." NEIL YOUNG**

**"What are you people *doin'*": Neil Young has some issues; (far left, top) with Crazy Horse in Colorado, 2019 (from left) Billy Talbot, Young, Nils Lofgren and Ralph Molina; (left, bottom) Lofgren in '75.**

# "IT'S ALL ONE SONG!"

**Twenty key CRAZY HORSE tracks that go on. And on. And on! By JOHN MULVEY.**




## 1. RUNNING DRY (REQUIEM FOR THE ROCKETS)

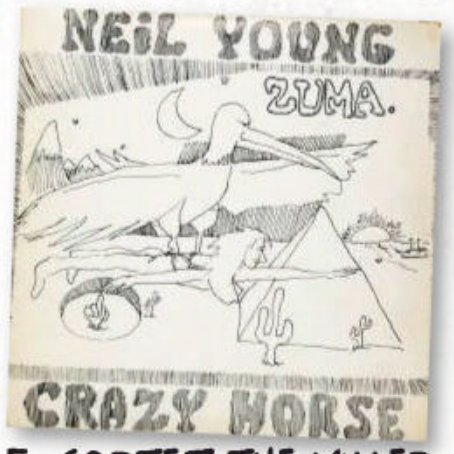
*(from Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere, 1969)*

January 1969. Slouchy LA band The Rockets have been inducted into Neil Young's world, renamed Crazy Horse, and hit on a primordial throb that serves them and their boss, on and off, for the next 50 years. First, they observe the last rites of their old life via a spectral folk song, with a starring role for a Rocket who didn't get a regular gig with Young, fiddler Bobby Notkoff. "These guys didn't act like they were in the studio," recalled producer David Briggs of that first session. "They acted like it was the end of the world."

## 3. WHEN YOU DANCE I CAN REALLY LOVE

*(from After The Gold Rush, 1970)*

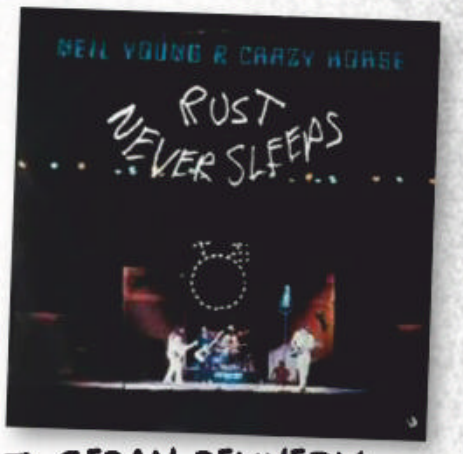
The last stand of Crazy Horse Mk 1. Danny Whitten had been sidelined early in the *After The Gold Rush* sessions due to heroin issues, replaced by Nils Lofgren. Whitten returned, though, for one last ecstatic clang on When You Dance… A showcase, too, for early Crazy Horse outrider Jack Nitzsche. "Jack's piano on that track is unreal," wrote Young in Waging Heavy Peace, accurately.




## 5. CORTEZ THE KILLER

*(from Zuma, 1975)*

For much of *Tonight's The Night*, Crazy Horse were rechristened The Santa Monica Flyers, with Nils Lofgren on second guitar. Follow-up *Zuma*, though, reintroduced the Horse with a new guitar foil, the discreet and unfussy Frank 'Poncho' Sampedro. Among many highlights, this languid new classic, where Young becomes so absorbed in his playing that the lovely song itself almost feels like an afterthought; the intro solo lasts nearly three and a half minutes.




## 7. SEDAN DELIVERY

*(from Rust Never Sleeps, 1979)*

Crazy Horse certainly had a rudimentary spirit akin to punk, if not always the velocity normally associated with that music. But for the *Rust Never Sleeps* take on a song originally slated for 1977's unreleased *Chrome Dreams*, Young radically upped the tempo – albeit inconsistently. Sedan Delivery's air of derangement is enhanced by sudden drops in pace so that the whole unsteady endeavour sounds, thrillingly, as if it might collapse at any moment.

## 2. DOWN BY THE RIVER

*(from Live At The Fillmore East, recorded 1970, released 2006)*

The quintessential Crazy Horse jam, written while Young was consumed with a 103 degree fever, has been exceptionally durable: check out Young sparring with Stephen Stills and CSNY in the Celebration At Big Sur movie. This is the best version – and the longest recorded (12:25), as Danny Whitten trades tense, glancing blows with Young. Skip to two minutes, as Young sputteringly kicks off into one of the greatest guitar solos in rock history.

## 4. COME ON BABY LET'S GO DOWNTOWN

*(from Tonight's The Night, 1975)*

Young attempted to reintegrate Whitten for 1972's *Harvest* tour, but his drug use and unreliability prompted another sacking on May 18. Whitten overdosed later that night. When *Tonight's The Night*, Young's raw threnody for Whitten and roadie Bruce Berry, finally emerged in 1975, it included this Whitten song from the 1970 Fillmore East gig: a joyous ramalam showcasing the magical, unstable blend of Young and Whitten's voices and guitars.

## 6. LOOK OUT FOR MY LOVE

*(from Comes A Time, 1978)*

The Stray Gators were generally Young's first-call backing band on acoustic sessions, but for two songs on the country-inflected *Comes A Time* he gave Crazy Horse a break. Look Out For My Love foregrounds their edginess – Sampedro's electric accents are fraught but superbly understated – and a harmonic vulnerability that more accomplished singers, most notably CSNY, could never affect.

## 8. LIKE A HURRICANE

*(from Live Rust, 1979)*

Part of the live Horse repertoire since 1976, and first released on the hodgepodge of 1977's *American Stars'n'Bars*, the *Live Rust* take is probably the definitive Like A Hurricane. Young's classic knack of subjecting a fragile and memorable song to massive elemental pressures has never been better articulated; Sampedro's synths add an ethereal wash beneath the tectonic riffing.

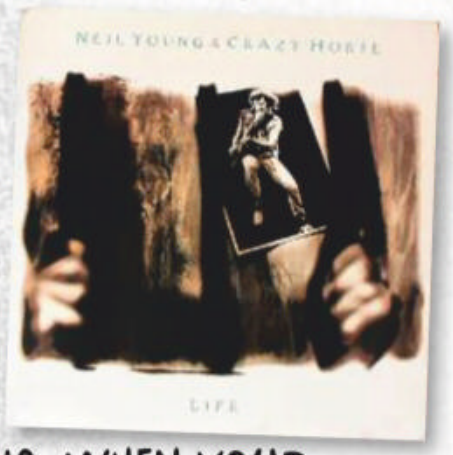
**Smokin' with Crazy Horse, 1976 (from left) Ralph Molina, Young, Billy Talbot, Frank Sampedro.**

Getty

## 9. SHOTS

*(from Re-Ac-Tor, 1981)*

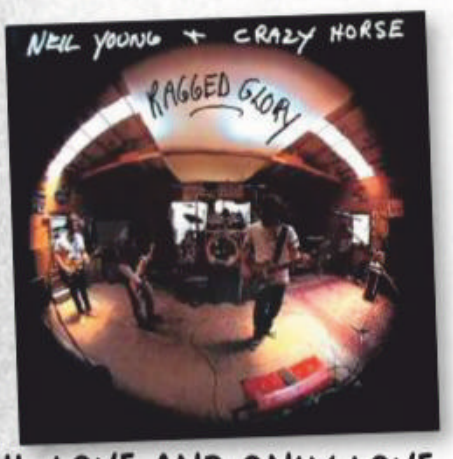
No such delicacy here. Shots remains, nearly 40 years on, one of the most brutal and gonzoid entries in the Young catalogue. Ralph Molina's drums assume an uncharacteristic gallop, but it's Young's weaponry, and his burgeoning interest in technology and its visceral possibilities, that dominate: a jarringly distorted guitar tone; juddering synth explosions deployed, repeatedly, for maximum cacophonous impact.




## 10. WHEN YOUR LONELY HEART BREAKS

*(from Life, 1987)*

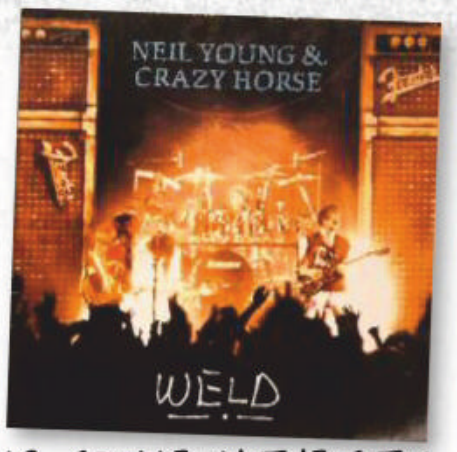
Crazy Horse's unvarnished primitivism was never going to be an ideal fit for the 1980s, but this misty synth glide is worth revisiting, notwithstanding the aesthetic debt to Berlin's Take My Breath Away. A live version on 1997's mostly gnarly *Year Of The Horse* is surprisingly faithful to the studio original.




## 11. LOVE AND ONLY LOVE

*(from Ragged Glory, 1990)*

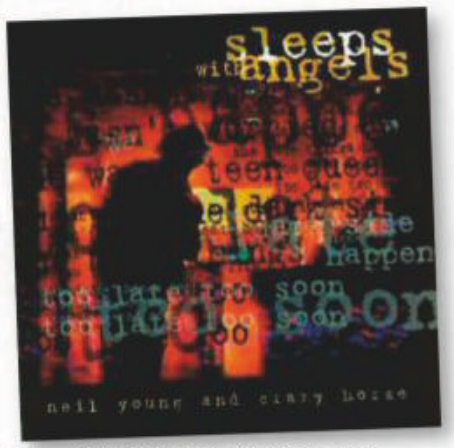
The capricious tangents of the '80s safely behind him, Young reconvened the Horse at the beginning of the 1990s for one of his very best albums. Untrammelled guitar heroics proliferate, apt for a man suddenly blessed with the new soubriquet Godfather Of Grunge. Love And Only Love (10:18) just shades Love To Burn (10:00), not least because of those vital extra 18 seconds.




## 12. CRIME IN THE CITY

*(from Weld, 1991)*

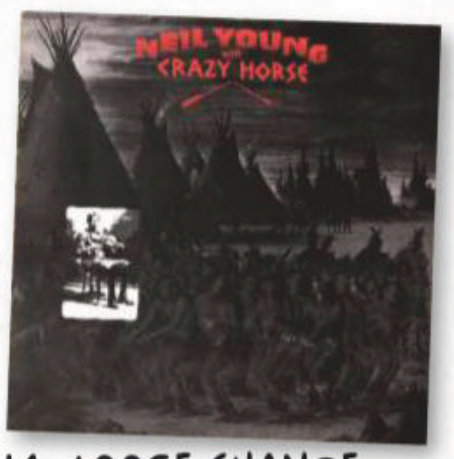
On 1989's *Freedom*, Young's digressive state-of-the-nation address had been punchy but acoustic, with trim from the Bluenotes horn section. Its true cranked potential, though, was tapped by Crazy Horse for one of the highlights of this sprawling live set. "Well, I keep getting younger," he claims plausibly. "My life's been funny that way."




## 13. SAFEWAY CART

*(from Sleeps With Angels, 1994)*

Following the acoustic balms of *Harvest Moon* and *Unplugged*, the return of Molina, Talbot and Sampedro for *Sleeps With Angels* suggested a re-engagement with noise. The truth, though, was weirder, never more so than on the gentle groove of Safeway Cart, a spare and meditative outlier in the canon that introduces a new iteration of this most storied band: crypto-ambient Crazy Horse!




## 14. LOOSE CHANGE

*(from Broken Arrow, 1996)*

The murkiest of all Crazy Horse albums acts as a suitably crude memorial to Young's longtime producer, David Briggs, who died in 1995. Loose Change begins as a typical Horse lope, but achieves a new mantric intensity after three minutes, when the band lock down on a single looping chord for eight minutes. According to Young biographer Jimmy McDonough, "When Sampedro's girlfriend asked why the band got hung up on the chord so long, he said, 'We were playing David on his way.'"

## 15. POCAHONTAS

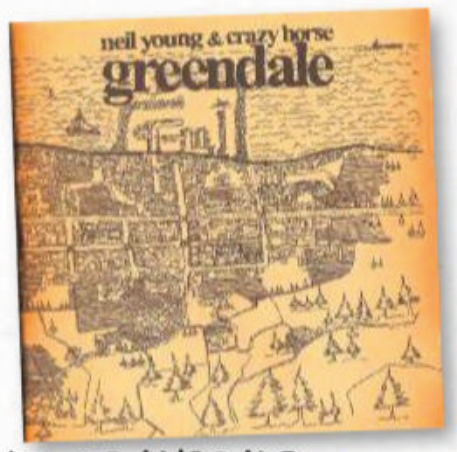
*(from Year Of The Horse, 1997)*

The live album *Year Of The Horse* opens with a heckler in Hartford, Connecticut, shouting, "They all sound the same." Young's response? "It's all," he claims, "one song." He then proceeds to show how most anything from his catalogue can be transformed into a Crazy Horse jam: Buffalo Springfield's Mr Soul, and this pumping electric rethink of Pocahontas, a song that first officially surfaced as an acoustic reverie on the first side of *Rust Never Sleeps*.

## 16. GOIN' HOME

*(from Are You Passionate?, 2001)*

Ten out of 11 tracks on the extremely soppy *Are You Passionate?* feature Booker T. & The M.G.'s as backing band, but Goin' Home is the show-stealing exception: a textbook Crazy Horse prowl, with Young at his most windswept and ruggedly sentimental. Tantalisingly, Young has been promising to release *Toast*, a full album of the sessions from which Goin' Home came, for the past 11 years.




## 17. GRANDPA'S INTERVIEW

*(from Greendale, 2003)*

Crazy Horse as empathetic players in musical theatre? That's the unlikely plot twist of *Greendale*, Young's eco-drama which enlists Talbot and Molina (but not, critically, Sampedro) to track his guitar perambulations and narrative expositions. Grandpa's Interview is the project's most engrossing and – of course – longest (12:57) chapter.

## 18. HORSE BACK

*(2012)*

Put out to pasture for nearly a decade, Young announced the end of the Crazy Horse hiatus by releasing a 37-minute instrumental jam online in January 2012. Echoes of Fuckin' Up and Cortez The Killer waft through the amp-burn, but this ostensible warm-up for the year's *Americana* and *Psychedelic Pill* albums catches the essence of the long-players: intuitive, exploratory, rapturously untethered from the constraints of an actual song.

## 19. RAMADA INN

*(from Psychedelic Pill, 2012)*

At 87 minutes, *Psychedelic Pill* is Young's longest album, and by some measures his most self-indulgent: opener Driftin' Back alone clocks in at 37 and a half minutes. But the space for Crazy Horse to manoeuvre and meander is critical, and the nuanced slow burn of Ramada Inn (16:49), in particular, is a late career high, a poignant tale of a long-term relationship tested by alcoholism.

## 20. SHE SHOWED ME LOVE

*(from Colorado, 2019)*

No Sampedro this time, but Nils Lofgren is back in the fold for this terrific staccato stomp. In his trademark 21st century style, Young's attention wanders lyrically, orbiting around prevailing environmental concerns, but his waywardness is anchored by the enduring resilience of Crazy Horse, as doggedly faithful in 2019 as they were in 1969: Neil Young's rock, in a weary land.

**Changing Horses: in Malibu, 1975 (from left) Young, Sampedro, Talbot, Molina and friends; (below) the band's fallen guitarist, Danny Whitten.**

*Continued from page 75*

get something from Crazy Horse that I don't get from *anybody*: CSNY, any band I've ever played with. There's a certain presence about their dedication to the music and about their being completely absorbed in the music.

"It not that other bands don't have that," he adds. "It's just that cosmically – as an old hippy term – the forces align when I play with the Horse. It makes it so that I can sing and talk about things that I can't do with other people."

Down the years, not all of Young's contemporaries have agreed with his assessment of Crazy Horse's transcendent qualities. Quoted in Shakey, Jimmy McDonough's 2002 Neil Young biography, Joni Mitchell witheringly mused: "If I would go into a little bar to go dancin', I'd say, 'What a great band.' But presented in concert? That should not be elevated to the concert level." Young's CSNY colleague/antagonist David Crosby was more scathing still, reckoning that the Horse "should've been shot at birth. They can't play."

Did those sniffy comments and outright attacks annoy Young, or did he just shrug and think: They don't get it? "I never even noticed it," he offers with a mischievous cackle. "It didn't matter to me what Crosby or Joni Mitchell thought about Crazy Horse. They obviously couldn't play with Crazy Horse, 'cos that's not their thing."

John Hanlon, Young's co-producer/engineer for nigh on 30 years, is in no doubt as to why the singer is still devoted to Crazy Horse. "They're willing to jump off the cliff with him," he says. "Musically, they pay attention to what he's doing and they're not afraid to make mistakes. They're not perfection players. They're going for the vibe that supports Neil's vision for his music. It's like improvisational jazz, but it's not jazz."

To Hanlon, Crazy Horse are all about the heart, not the mind. Visceral, not cerebral. "If anybody's *thinking* in that band while they're playing, it's a bad take," he says. Underlining his point, he recalls a maxim of his former mentor, David Briggs, wildcard producer of 19 Neil Young albums before his death in 1995, aged 51: "Briggs used to say, 'The more you think, the more you stink.'"

Henry Diltz, Getty, Gijsbert Hanekroot/Getty

NILS LOFGREN CAN ATTEST TO THE POWER OF Crazy Horse, from both inside and outside, having initially encountered them as a fan. On May 15, 1969, still only 17, he first witnessed the band performing at the Cellar Door in Washington DC, the line-up featuring their late guitarist/co-vocalist Danny Whitten. "They were doing the Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere tour when I walked in on them," he remembers. "Their first tour, really. Danny was playing and singing great but, even back then, y'know, struggling with alcohol and drugs."

Lofgren hooked up with Young and Crazy Horse again when he moved to Los Angeles, looking for a record deal with his band, Grin. In LA, David Briggs took the teenager under his wing; subsequently, Young invited him to join sessions for *After The Gold Rush* – on piano: an instrument of which Lofgren had no experience whatsoever. "I wanted him to be playing something that he wasn't used to," says Young, "so that everything was new. 'Cos the more new it is, the simpler it is, the better it is. But he knew what he was doing on the piano even before he knew how to play it."

Lofgren went on to contribute to the eponymous 1971 Crazy Horse album (*sans* Neil) and, following Whitten's diazepam/alcohol-related death in '72, moved over to electric guitar. Which, of course, makes his position in the current line-up of Crazy Horse all the more fitting. "He was the original," Young points out. "Aside from Danny."

In Lofgren's mind, a line can be drawn directly from *Colorado* back to the tequila-and-weed-fuelled, grief-fogged 1973 sessions for *Tonight's The Night*. In both cases, the musicians were winging it, barely familiar with the songs. "David [Briggs] and Neil wanted everyone to be on the seat of their pants," Lofgren recalls. "Just down in it, using their instincts and playing something very emotional and powerful. On *Tonight's The Night*, Ralphie and I used to go and ask to re-sing some things. David and Neil always said, 'No, you were in it. Sometimes you were la-de-dah-ing, but you hit notes that felt good. We're not changing a single note.'"

The approach to takes is not the only hangover from *Tonight's The Night*. Five years ago, Young told me that he'd pretty much quit smoking marijuana. "I'm still high from the '70s," he quipped. But it seems there have been some alterations to his state of self-styled "extreme moderation"… "Well, things come and go," he laughs. "I would say that I'm *back*. I don't wanna see that weed get wasted. There's no reason for that. I've gotta say, without weed, this album probably would not be the same. That's the focus, y'know… the focus of being able to write the songs and play them."

On *Tonight's The Night*, Young would run through songs with the band in the early hours, heavily stoned. This time, he sent them batches of rough demos ahead of the sessions. "Neil would call us, talk to us, send us e-mails," says Lofgren. "Basically, the message was, 'Get familiar with the chord changes, but don't go too deep past that, OK?'"

Young's philosophy of recording doesn't differ much from his approach to songwriting: don't labour it. "Most of the songs, seven or eight, were written in the month before we recorded," relates the singer. "It just happened real fast." Quickest to materialise was the album's whispered, closing love song, I Do: "I wrote that one in probably 15 minutes or something, y'know."

As soon as he heard them, Lofgren thought, "Man, these are very cool songs. But I envisioned them, of course, with Crazy Horse."

One aspect of the *Tonight's The Night* band cannot be duplicated, and that's pedal steel/slide guitar-player Ben Keith, who died in 2010: "It's one guy missing," says Young. With respect to Keith, Lofgren and Sampedro, however, if Talbot and Molina are in the saddle, it's Crazy Horse. "That music has got the groove that I like to use," says Young, "and when we play together there's a communication among us. Y'know, Billy's a genius," he adds. "So few notes and there's so much soul in every note. And then Ralph is, like, an incredible drummer. One of the greatest drummers on the planet, for my music. If not the greatest. He's been with me a long time and we got a feel. And Ralph, he doesn't take any shit from anybody. So,

**"ALMOST EVERYBODY I MADE GREAT MUSIC WITH HAS BEEN IMPACTED. MOST OF THE PEOPLE THAT DID IT ARE NOT HERE ANY MORE." NEIL YOUNG**

what you get is Ralph. We go back 50 or so years and we know what we're thinking."

In other words, for *Colorado*, Young and Crazy Horse were drawing on decades of shared life and musical experience. But, as Lofgren points out, "This was our first time in the studio in a long, long time…"

MAY 1, 2018, THE 2,000-SEATER WARNORS THEATRE in Fresno, California. Neil Young had awoken the slumbering Crazy Horse after six years to play this first show in a series of relatively intimate concerts. The gigs marked the release of *Roxy: Tonight's The Night Live*, an album recorded over three nights at the titular Sunset Strip club back in 1973.

Young had one rule ahead of these new dates, adhering to his "Don't spook the Horse" decree: no rehearsals. The first time the band picked up their instruments with the newly-reinstated Nils Lofgren was at soundcheck. "We didn't have to rehearse," says Young. "If it sounds good, we play. If it doesn't, we don't. The songs are real easy. So, we play them and we see what happens."

During soundcheck, Lofgren became very quickly and acutely aware of how different his role would be in this incarnation of Crazy Horse, as opposed to his regular gig with Bruce Springsteen.

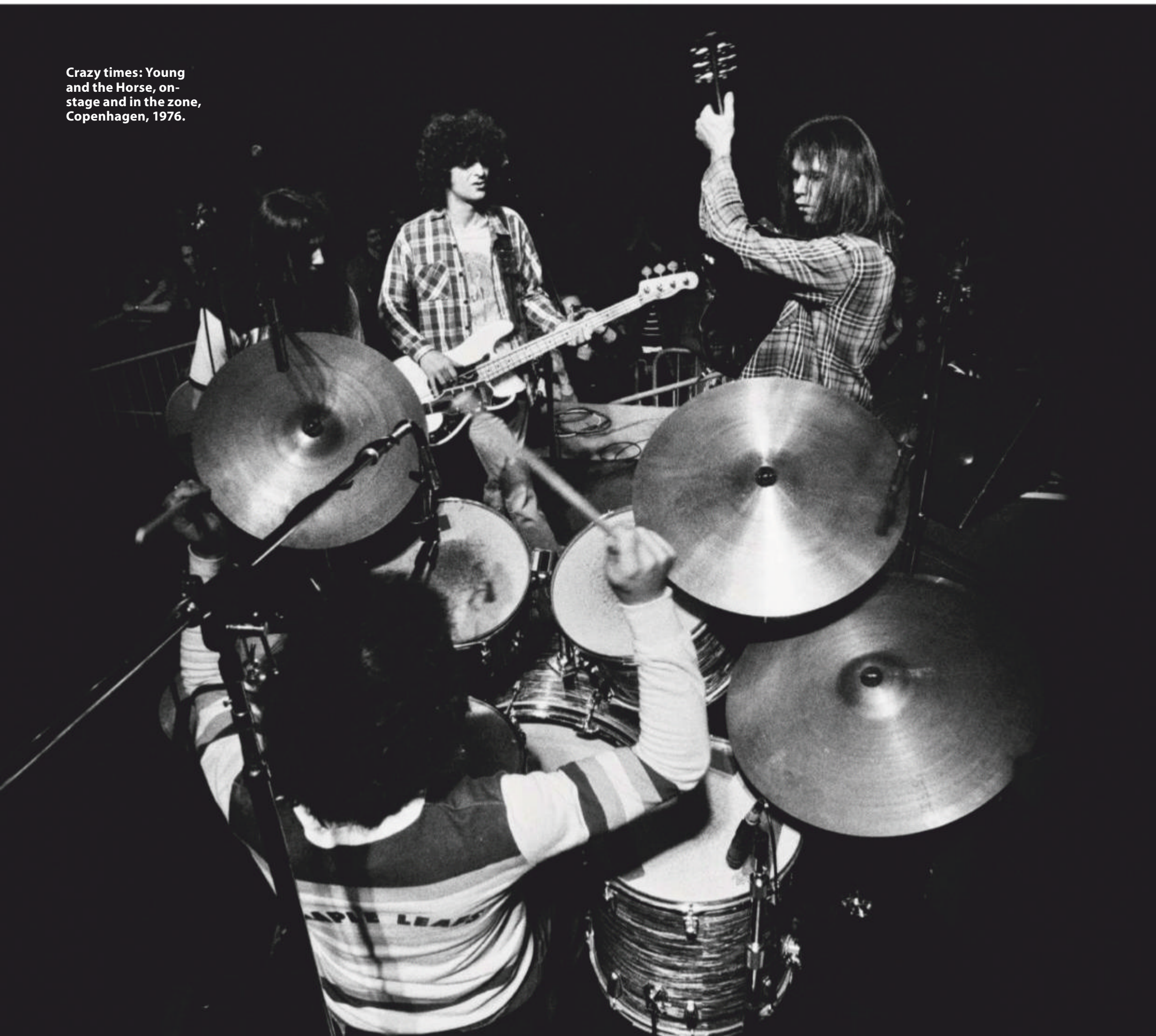
"In The E Street Band, it's such a massive band, and I just kinda stay out of the way," he says. "But right away, Neil said, 'Nils, I need to hear you more.' And we moved my amp in. 'Hey, you're not loud enough.' Then we put it up and all of a sudden, I was almost startled by how loud I was. But I realised, like, there's only four sounds: bass and drums and two guitars. With Crazy Horse, there's a lot of space. It just gives a lot of weight to what each individual does."

Reconvening before a pair of shows in Winnipeg this February, Lofgren, Molina and Talbot got the jump on their impulsive leader, rehearsing at the bassist's house in South Dakota. Upon their arrival in Canada, though, Young had devised another new rule to keep the musicians on their toes: no setlists.

"Right," he laughs. "Well, they might have a setlist some day, but I don't think I'll look at it. I'd rather play what was on my mind, y'know. Sometimes we have a setlist as a guide, in case there's *nothing* on my mind at all and I don't know what I'm doing."

"It was wild and ragged like it always is, and beautiful," says Lofgren. "Y'know, all the shows had moments. But they were inconsistent, weaving in and out of things that felt great, to things that didn't quite feel right. The last night in Winnipeg, the whole night, mistakes and all, felt special. Ralphie was always saying, 'Hey man, this is good, but what we need is new music that we make together.' I'm like, Ralphie, let's be patient. But that was very prophetic of Ralphie."

"The last show in Winnipeg, we actually hit our stride," is Young's estimation. "We realised that the chemistry was strong and that we should probably record." ➢



**Crazy times: Young and the Horse, on-stage and in the zone, Copenhagen, 1976.**

# “ALL HELL’S GONNA BREAK LOOSE. IT SEEMS LIKE A REALITY THAT’S INESCAPABLE. UNLESS YOU’RE A COMPLETE DUNCE.” NEIL YOUNG

➢ Come April, at the Studio In The Clouds, Young and the band stuck to the recording method John Hanlon had first experienced while working on 1990’s fiery return-to-form album *Ragged Glory* – they wouldn’t come to the mixing desk and listen back to takes unless they felt they’d captured something special in the live room.

“I mean, I stay out of Neil’s particular mental process, because that would be an exercise in futility,” Hanlon says. “The thing with him is, even if he looks like he doesn’t know what he’s doing, he knows what he’s doing. And, if he doesn’t, he’s a great actor…”

Young has described this line-up of the band as a “Horse of a different colour”. What, for him, is different? “Well, there’s really no difference,” he insists, before instantly changing his mind. “It’s a little more defined now than it was before. You hear the difference between, say, *Colorado* and *Zuma*, or *Colorado* and *Rust Never Sleeps*. There is a difference, ’cos Nils brings a whole other thing to it.”

If what Lofgren lends to Crazy Horse is an added musicality, contrasting with Sampedro’s no-frills rhythm guitar, he can certainly dig into the deep, unhurried grooves the band are best known for. Going right back to Down By The River and Cowgirl In The Sand on *Everybody Knows…*, they would just keep on playing if it felt good, resulting in nine- or 10-minute tracks. On *Colorado*, one key song, She Showed Me Love, sails past the 13-minute mark. “Everyone was down in it,” says Lofgren. “Just this kind of Neanderthal rock.”

“We didn’t really realise what we were doing,” recalls Young. “After three verses or so, we hung on that chord for, like, eight minutes or something. I said, Well, I think we’re gonna edit it down, ’cos I know it’s probably too long. Billy just looked at me and said, ‘Good luck finding a place to cut that.’ And he was right. There was nowhere to cut, so we left the whole thing in.”

So spontaneous was much of the recording process that, when the sessions ended, Young and band didn’t realise they already had the album in the can. “I think when we left,” says Lofgren, “Neil thought, ‘Hey this is a great start, and when I’m back from touring [with Promise Of The Real, dates including the co-headliner with Dylan at Hyde Park on July 12], maybe late August, we’ll keep on recording.’ But over the course of the next month or so, as he did some listening, he felt like he had a strong record already done.”

All the way through the recording of *Colorado*, the proceedings were being filmed for a documentary, The Mountaintop Sessions, set to follow the release of the album. The result shows some of the frustrations Young and the band experienced while making the record: time lost due to problems with equipment, feedbacking PA systems and all. Young describes it as “the most in-depth, behind-the-scenes raw look at the turmoil and angst and love and dedication behind making a record the way we make them.” With the cameras locked-off and hidden around the studio, most of the time the band weren’t really aware they were being filmed.

“No, we didn’t think about it,” says the singer. “You’ll know that we don’t think about it when you see what we’re doing and what we look like (*laughs*). Nothing cool about it.”

BACK IN 2014, NEIL YOUNG TOLD THIS WRITER that he was determined to devote the rest of his time on the planet to promoting environmental concerns. Five years on, he continues to doggedly pursue that aim. Where, in the lyric to After The Gold Rush 49 years ago, mother nature was “on the run”, now, in She Showed Me Love, her very existence is threatened, as Young rails against “old white guys trying to kill mother nature”.

“All hell’s gonna break loose,” he warns. “It seems like a reality that’s inescapable. Unless you’re a complete dunce. So, there’s a lot of dunces out there.” He does, however, see some hope. Later in the same song, he pays tribute to “young folks fighting to save mother nature”. “Look at people like Greta Thunberg and all these 12-year-olds and 13-year-olds that are pissed. They’re going, ‘What are you people *doin*’?’”

Young’s resolve to speak out and antagonise has similarly intensified. In Help Me Lose My Mind on *Colorado*, he wryly offers the words, “I gotta face that gets me in trouble/I gotta voice that does its damage”. A recently-leaked internal memo from controversial agribusiness Monsanto certainly proved the latter, revealing that in the wake of Young’s 2015 album *The Monsanto Years* and his ongoing criticisms of their genetic modification practices, the company considered legal action against the singer.

“They’re *panicking*,” Young snaps, his voice rising in volume. “They’re not considering legal action. They’re trying to figure out a way to support bad reviews of everything that I do and all that crap. They have no legal case. There is no case. I mean, that’s bullshit. They’re never gonna go unnoticed. They’re never gonna go without being called out.”

Neil Young, of course, likes to keep it natural, especially when it comes to his weed stash. “Say what you will about it, [but] it grows here on the planet, we’re on the planet,” he argues. “It’s not like it’s some fucking thing that some scientist built in a lab and patented, so you can’t have it unless you have it with their GMOs and all their crap. It’s not one of those. Homegrown’s all right with me.” ➢

## “BE GREAT OR BE GONE”

**How to record Neil Young, by his long-serving engineer and producer JOHN HANLON: “If Neil has to put on a pair of headphones, you’re in a world of hurt.”**

“I grew up on *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere* after smoking some great weed back in ’69 in high school when that came out. I listened to *After The Gold Rush*, I listened to *Harvest*, but I didn’t pay attention to those. I was into the rock’n’roll, the two electric guitars, drums and bass.

David Briggs, Neil’s dear friend and long-time producer, brought me under his wing [as a recording engineer]. I worked with David first on *Trans* remixes in ’82, ’83. Never met Neil. But I knew someday I’d get that call if David and Neil started out a new record, and in 1990 I got that call and we went up there to the ranch [Broken Arrow, south-west of San Jose, CA] in April to make *Ragged Glory*.

David gave me some background information on how Neil works. Basically, he said, ‘If you’re a good host, y’know, you never run out of toilet paper. And tape is like that. Don’t ever run out of tape.’ So, we always were recording.

It was a bit of a scare when Neil never came out to the [mobile recording] truck, y’know. A week in, I go to David, What if he doesn’t like my sound? He goes, ‘Well then, you better have your car facing outwards and your bags in the back, ’cos they’ll kill ya. You’ll be fired on the spot and then good luck with that, ’cos it’s a long way off the ranch.’

But it was amazing what David taught me. He goes, ‘You might get more guitar out of the hi-hat mike…’ You’d get a certain ambience out of the hi-hat mike that might be close to the back of the cabinet of Neil’s amp than you would out of the front mike. You had to get your sound with all the faders up at the same time. It was just a classic way of working. I hear imperfections in how I recorded *Ragged Glory*, but still, it’s a great energy. The performances transcend everything on that record.

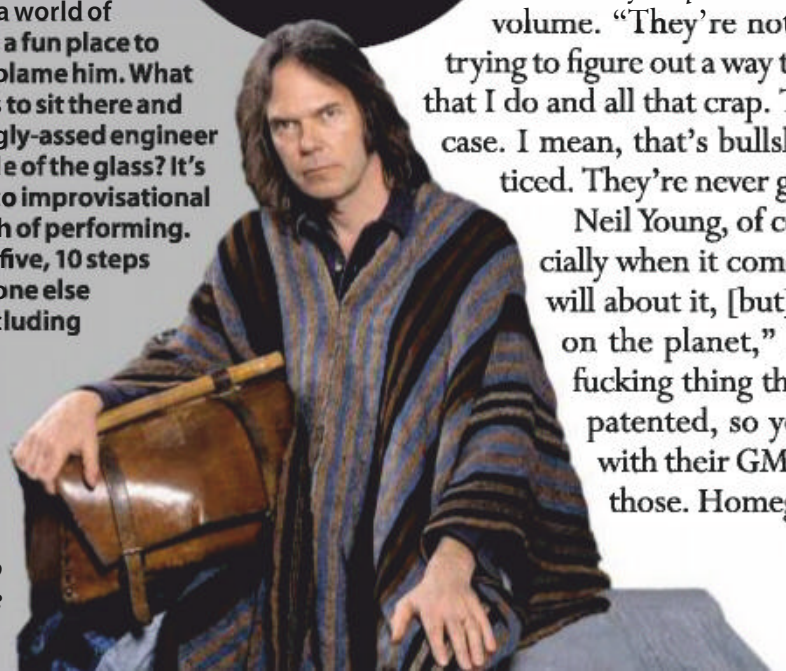
Every time I’ve recorded with him, we’ve always tried to get the basic track without a lot of overdubbing. The energy has to be there in the basic track. If somebody in the band makes a big mistake, if it can’t be fixed, then the pressure’s on that musician. He just looks at everybody and goes, ‘Well, we’ve got to take it again.’ It’s, ‘Be great or be gone,’ y’know what I mean? It’s group art.

Neil’s not gonna want to sit there and overdub. If Neil has to put on a pair of headphones and stare at an engineer through the glass, you’re in a world of hurt. That’s not a fun place to be. And I don’t blame him. What musician wants to sit there and stare at some ugly-assed engineer on the other side of the glass? It’s not conducive to improvisational art and the truth of performing.

He’s always five, 10 steps ahead of everyone else around him, including me (*laughs*). So, trying to stay current with him is a little difficult. But you do your best.”

*As told to Tom Doyle*

**“I HEAR IMPERFECTIONS IN HOW I RECORDED *RAGGED GLORY*. BUT STILL, IT’S A GREAT ENERGY.” JOHN HANLON**



Alamy, Getty (4)

Everynight's the night: Young rocks Madison Square Garden, NYC, September 27, 1978, with (from left) Talbot, Sampedro and Molina.

Campaiging in the free world: Young in the '70s and (right) on-stage at the Beale Street Festival, Memphis, 2016; (below) climate change activist Greta Thunberg, 2019; (opposite) Neil at Farm Aid, 1990.

**"I STAY OUT OF NEIL'S MENTAL PROCESS, BECAUSE THAT WOULD BE AN EXERCISE IN FUTILITY. EVEN IF HE LOOKS LIKE HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING, HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING." JOHN HANLON, PRODUCER**

For his part, Nils Lofgren has been clean and sober for 31 years, but could nonetheless respect a certain backstage ritual at the most recent Crazy Horse shows: "We'd come off-stage and before the encore, they'd pass it around and everyone would take a little hit of a joint. Of course, I wouldn't. But I get it. It was a far cry from (*laughs*) spending all day winding up on tequila and weed before you do a show. But still, whatever Neil has going on, man, to me he's one of the greatest. There's a handful of some of the great writers of all time. And I consider him one of them."

Calling out injustices and "dunces" is now what drives Neil Young on. In new electric folk song Rainbow Of Colors, his message is that multiracial America won't be easily dismantled by the far right.

"It'll never be dismantled," he avers. "Those people are kidding themselves. This white supremacy shit. Trump actually said, 'Y'know I don't mind immigrants. I really would welcome more immigrants from Norway.' [Trump's actual quote was: "Why do we want all these people from all these shithole countries here? We should have more people from places like Norway."] Y'know… so… yeah (*sighs*)."

Counterbalancing the rage on *Colorado* are Young's ruminations on mortality. This summer saw the death of Elliot Roberts, his manager since 1968. "I think that shook everyone up," says Lofgren. "I know it did. Neil had to literally leave Elliot's funeral and go to Europe to play with Promise Of The Real." In the aftermath, a planned autumn tour with Crazy Horse was cancelled. "I think it was just too much for him to stay on the road," the guitarist reasons. "He felt, like, After that, I gotta go home and kinda gather myself."

MOJO was politely asked not to bring up the matter of Roberts' passing with Young in this interview and he never mentions his former manager by name. But a sense of more general loss is apparent in *Colorado*'s beautifully reflective ballad, Olden Days, where the singer sadly notes that some of his friends have "disappeared somehow". "Happens to everybody, apparently," Young gently chuckles. "I'm chronicling it and just trying to keep track."

Elsewhere, in Think Of Me, Young explores the idea of the human spirit moving through the natural world, having passed into birds and animals. Is that a hope? Or a belief? "It's just a feeling," he says. "It's the way I think things are. You can tell that we're all part of the same thing. It's pretty obvious."

Does getting older just naturally make his thoughts turn more towards mortality?

"Well, it's not getting older," he says. "It's a combination of all kind of things. There's a lot of sadness and reality and the passing of time and the passing of lives. Almost everybody that I made great music with, except for Crazy Horse, has been impacted one way or another. I've lost a lot of friends that've helped me make my music through the years. Y'know, everything I was involved in, most of the people that did it are not here any more. So, that makes you think about your mortality because it's all around you. The signs are all there.

"But I prefer to take care of myself and do the best I can to deal with not being able to really remember what's goin' on, y'know (*laughs*). I gotta lot of things going on, but I can't remember where I put my coffee…"

THE NEIL YOUNG OF 2019 IS FACING FORWARDS, BUT also preserving his past, in the form of increasingly regular vintage live releases – the most recent, *Tuscaloosa*, commemorates a February 1973 show at the University Of Alabama with the Stray Gators – and his Neil Young Archives website, offering subscribers high-quality streaming of his catalogue. "We don't want all my best music to be remembered as an MP3," he practically growls.

But while the curation of his legacy is meticulous, it is sometimes painstakingly slow; Exhibit A being his long-planned *Archives Volume 2* compilation of both familiar and previously-unreleased live and studio material, originally mentioned by him in 2009, then slated for release in 2014. He promises – definitely, no excuses – it's coming next year.

"There's so much material between the albums," he explains. "Y'know… it's a *lot*. That's why it's [taken] so long to do it. And we keep changing our minds about what's gonna be in it and what isn't. It's a long process."

John Hanlon, tasked with remastering the music on *Volume 2*, says that it comprises 10 discs. In particular, he talks up *Homegrown*, which will also arrive in 2020 as a stand-alone release. "*Homegrown* is just phenomenal," he enthuses. "A hallmark of his career is the players he gets to work with. So, these are just studio cats and great musicians out of Nashville and Tulsa and elsewhere."

The producer also singles out the so-far unreleased live set *Odeon/Budokan*, recorded in 1976. "It's got an amazing take of Stringman, on acoustic piano and vocal, done at the Hammersmith Odeon, and electric stuff from the Budokan theatre in Tokyo."

Young, meanwhile, is buzzed about the release next year of the 2013 live album/film *Alchemy*. "It's similar to what we did with *Rust Never Sleeps* and what we did with *Weld*," he says. "That is probably the greatest Crazy Horse record with Poncho. He's just magnificent on that record."

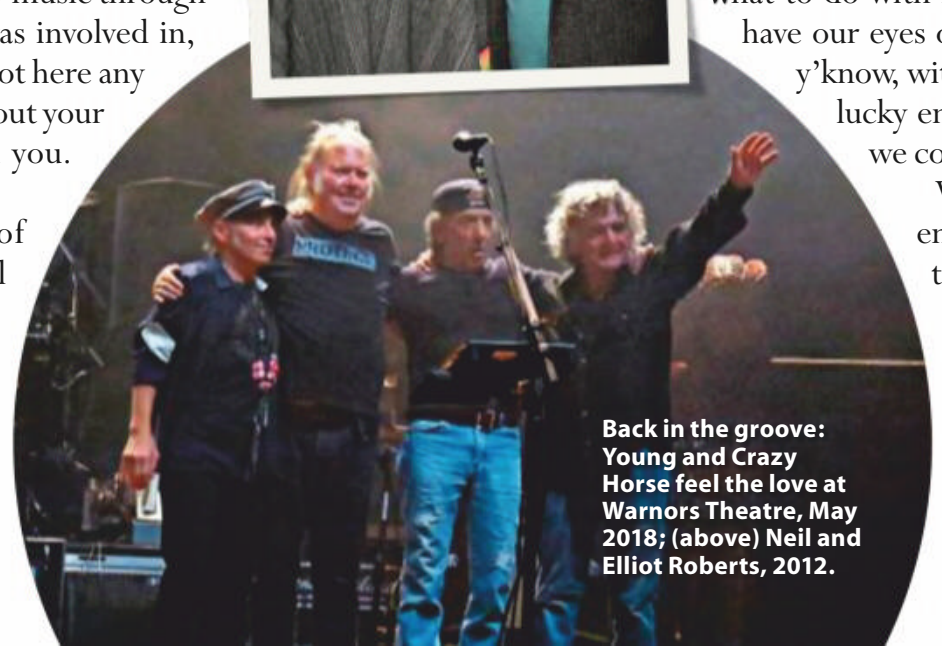
As regards the future touring plans of Crazy Horse, Young says that will depend upon what scheduling demands might be placed on Nils Lofgren by Bruce Springsteen. "Whatever Bruce does, it's gonna affect us," he states. "But we're just movin' along, we're lookin' at some gigs. I'm sure at the beginning of next year something will probably happen."

"There's no definitive plans with The E Street Band yet," says Lofgren. "But, again, they're talking about some possible things. I couldn't pick two people I love and admire more (*laughs*). And I also couldn't pick two people that are more seat-of-your-pants-inspired, moment-to-moment decision makers, y'know."

"We don't wanna drive ourselves into the ground," Young adds. "I'd much rather do a little bit of [touring], then make another record or something. The thing that lasts is the record. And so, if you ever think about how much time you have and what to do with it… We'll see what happens. We have our eyes open. We're looking at 2020 and, y'know, within this space of time when we're lucky enough to have Nils, we'll see what we come up with."

What's abundantly clear, in the end, is that Young, who will turn 74 this November, has absolutely no plans to slow things down.

"Well," he offers, conclusively, in that familiar, knowing drawl, "this is what I look like slowing down." Ⓜ



**Back in the groove: Young and Crazy Horse feel the love at Warnors Theatre, May 2018; (above) Neil and Elliot Roberts, 2012.**

Press Association, Tom Hambleton

# MOJO FILTER

## YOUR GUIDE TO THE MONTH'S BEST MUSIC

EDITED BY **JENNY BULLEY** jenny.bulley@bauermedia.co.uk

"Auerbach's solo keeps changing shape, from rock to folk, like a lava lamp that thinks it's Led Zeppelin."

**SYLVIE SIMMONS SEES THE BLACK KEYS, LIVES P116**

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# Mothership connection

The Birmingham blues are back, as Jeff Lynne's one-man orchestra blasts off for a 14th mission into the great beyond. By **Keith Cameron**. Illustration by **Quinton Winter**.

## Jeff Lynne's ELO

★★★★

From Out Of Nowhere

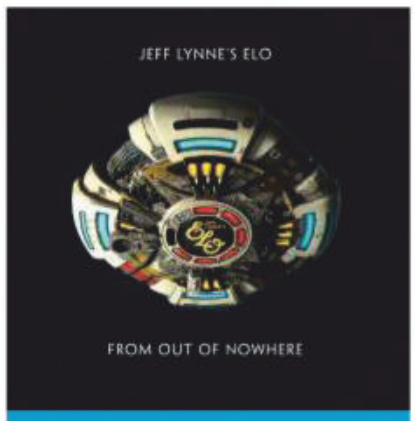
COLUMBIA. CD/DL/LP

PEOPLE TEND to underestimate Jeff Lynne. Mention ELO and they think of spaceships, OTT arrangements, cheesy vocoder FX, and silly lyrics like "Whama-lama-bama-lama, rock'n'roll is king". They mistake his modesty for modest abilities, take for granted the skills required to make such dense music seem so simple. Publicly, at least, Lynne too makes light of himself and "my little songs" – a phrase he often applies to his work, even when he's playing the songs with a 13-piece band to 60,000 fans at Wembley Stadium.

Musicians, however, take Jeff Lynne seriously. In his recent interview with MOJO, Pete Townshend explained that his new novel-cum-musical, The Age Of Anxiety, involved a rock band called Hero Ground Zero: "Somewhere between ELO, The Who, Led Zeppelin and Fleetwood Mac." Such is ELO's status as a '70s signifier that one of the decade's defining mega-bands considers them a fellow paradigm. The new Who album also features a song called Hero Ground Zero, built upon successive melancholy orchestral chord shifts, reaching upwards for deliverance from the material world. In other words, a very Electric Light Orchestra type of song.

There's plenty more where that came from on *From Out Of Nowhere*, albeit with Jeff Lynne's plaintive croon instead of Roger Daltrey's lusty bellow, and without the orchestra. In that respect, it mirrors 2015's comeback *Alone In The Universe*: written and produced by Jeff, as with every previous ELO record, but also sung and played almost entirely by the man himself, at 'Bungalow Palace Studio', AKA Jeff Lynne's house in Los Angeles. He hasn't used an orchestra for 40 years. Today, Lynne builds the background noise using keyboards, both new and old. Several songs on this new album feature a Hammond S-6 that once belonged to George Harrison. If it's good enough for a Beatle…

This decade's wildly successful reactivation of ELO is a happy confluence of the period hits' staying power, Lynne's rekindled zeal for performing them, and the ability to recalibrate his craft for the current era, not merely replicate past glories. *From Out Of Nowhere*'s opening title track utilises a familiar Lynne technique, the cyclical midtempo descending chord sequence picked out on guitar, with vocals pinned in harmony until the chorus when they shift upwards, before an inevitable comedown. "Let me go to a place where I belong," he entreats, his voice sounding fragile even amid the stacked harmonies, like sky-scraping origami sculptures at the mercy of the wind. In essence, it's a similar format to the very first Electric Light Orchestra single, 10538 Overture, from 1972, but with the symphonic pretension now replaced by a simple vulnerability that the younger man wouldn't so readily allow.




**"Lynne has an ability to recalibrate his craft for the current era."**

Help Yourself is another Lynne archetype: the warm-toned choogling hymn to dejection. "I thought I could turn things around/And show you something that was new," sings Jeff. "But all I got was disappointment…" He summons the wherewithal to daub tear-stained melody in every corner. This is Del Shannon's Little Town Flirt, but with its protagonist shorn of all fight and bravado.

Unlike *Alone In The Universe*'s pick'n'mix sequencing, the first half of *From Out Of Nowhere* is, even by Lynne's standards, obsessively bittersweet. The bossa nova-inflected All My Love's uplift lasts merely until Lynne's opening lyric lodges in the heart like a splinter: "If I could only tell you now what I could never tell you then/And wander through the streets of yesterday." By the end he's reduced to hoping for "a sunny day". Inevitably, the next song is called Down Came The Rain, another relentless sing-along fugue of despair, which starts off subterranean and heads lower: "You let me go when I was down/You let me fall when I could drown". He rallies in verse three ("Now the time has come at last/Those days were sliding into the past/And nevermore will there be misery"), but the heavens open again in the chorus. All great ELO albums have a rain song, and this ranks alongside *Out Of The Blue*'s Standing In The Rain. It's followed by Losing You, an Orbisonian rhapsody in azure.

This implacably doleful first half is balanced by a levitational second, opened by the Chuck Berry barbuster One More Time ("We gotta give in to the rock'n'roll") featuring a Killer-compatible right-hand piano assault by Richard Tandy, the only other original-era ELO member in Lynne's present-day set-up. Sci-Fi Woman is a cute lovelorn invocation of two favourite Lynne topics, but in the realms of fantasy it's small beer next to the romping hook-festooned Time Of Our Life: essentially a review from the stage of Lynne's 2017 Wembley gig. "I can't believe this is going down/I said to my friend Phil," Jeff recalls, before marvelling at the memory of "60,000 mobile phones, shining in the dark of night… And boy did they shine/When we struck up with Telephone Line." Whereupon Jeff essays an impression of the crowd singing the chorus of Telephone Line, unarguably one of the greatest "little songs" Jeff Lynne has ever written.

Confidence levels fuelled since 2014's initially tentative comeback swiftly progressed to playing stadiums at the age of 69, *From Out Of Nowhere* is a stronger, better-focused set than its predecessor. The closing Songbird even offers a surprise twist – a Roy Orbison-styled Jeff Lynne weepie of the deepest blue, but with an actual happy ending. "Just late last night/I heard her sweet voice calling/And she was home/And my blues are gone." As most people know, Lynne is no Bob Dylan – but as a Traveling Wilbury he's been in a band with Bob Dylan, so what do most people know?

Of the bands in Pete Townshend's list, ELO are unique. They've never enjoyed serious critical appraisal. Nor were they a conduit for teenage tribal gathering. Yet these songs of rueful yearning would not die – indeed, time has shown them to be generation-proof. Likewise, the shy genius of the man who wrote them. *From Out Of Nowhere* proves Jeff Lynne's de-scaled version of his old band and big little songs has the power to endure. Not just one more time, but for evermore.

**BACK STORY: COME ON, PHIL THE NOISE**

● June 24, 2017 saw ELO play Wembley Stadium: so big a deal Jeff Lynne wrote a song about it on his new album. As well as the sights and sounds of "60,000 rocking out", Time Of Our Life mentions Jeff talking to "my friend Phil". This is only the latest cameo in the Jeff Lynne story for Phil Hatton, a Birmingham musician who's been Jeff's personal assistant for many years,a role that's involved him in stellar Lynne productions for the likes of Roy Orbison, George Harrison, The Traveling Wilburys and The Beatles' *Anthology*. "I've known Phil since he was about 14," says Jeff. "He's just a great guy."

**JEFF SPEAKS!** MR ELO ON MAKING THINGS RIGHT, FEELING BETTER AND LETTING THE ENGINEER HAVE A SHAKE.

Jeff Lynne, making it better by far.

# "Music's the most fun you can have."

## Jeff Lynne talks to Keith Cameron.

**There was a 15-year gap between the previous two ELO albums, but this one comes just four years after *Alone In The Universe* – why the sudden creative surge?**

"I think it must have something to do with me enjoying playing live again. It's been fantastic. I've had more fun these last five years doing music than I ever had before, in the old days of touring. It's so much fun to tour now because everything sounds so much better. We've got the right equipment, we've got a nice 13-piece band and they're all great musicians. I'm just chuffed to be in the band, really!"

**How did the album come about?**

"Well, the record company asked me to do one. I was working on it in 2018, before we went on the big long tour around America, the UK and Europe. I had to say to Rob Stringer, 'I really haven't finished it yet.' He was, 'Fine, we'll wait.' It just wasn't finished to the extent that I like it to be, production-wise, and arrangement-wise. I finally got it – I sang it better, put more harmonies in. I had a lot of fun, making it better by far than it was the year before."

**According to the credits, you play almost everything on the new long-player.**

"Yes, you can always believe your credits. I do play everything. Everything except tambourine and shakers. I let Steve [Jay, engineer] do that, because he's really good at them. (*Laughs*) I don't know why that's funny, but it just is. I'm sorry. Well, he loves doing 'em anyway. And I like listening to him do 'em."

**The only other person on the record is original ELO keyboardist Richard Tandy.**

"He played the piano solo on One More Time. Ridiculously fast. I can't get near the speed he does."

**He's missed the past few tours due to illness – how is his health now?**

"He's now been clear for about six months. So he seems in good spirits, and I think he's feeling a lot better. He's much more up and about and active – and he's playing. I'd love to see him on-stage again. It could well be possible. But I don't want to tempt fate. I love Richard, he's me oldest pal in the group."

**Is this album a case of "one more time"? Maybe the last time?**

"If anything, it would be one great last tour. That's what that song was really about. Going out to play one more time, and then packing it in. I've no idea – they keep coming at us with these giant offers for stadiums in Europe and all-sorts. And I'm going, 'Hang on a bit, I was only gonna do this for a minute or two. Suddenly I'm in a full-time job.' (*Laughs*) Knackered! Music's the best. There's no doubt about it. It's just the most fun you can have. So I'll keep doing it until I get fed up with it, or it gets fed up with me."

## Ghostface Killah

★★★★

Ghostface Killahs

MUSIC GENERATION CORP. CD/DL/LP

**Brisk, menacing solo return from the Wu-Tang Clan's most prolific MC.**

After an extended bout of conceptual dithering alongside Adrian Younge, BadBadNotGood and The Revelations, one of rap's greatest vein-pulsing voices comes dancing off the ropes. Whether it's the gritty hood stomp of Party Over Here, fuzzed-out electric guitars of Burner To Burner or repetitive flute flurries of all-too-brief standout Conditioning, producer Danny Caiazzo flips the cinematic backdrops this lyrical heavyweight excels at. Best of all is the dewy-eyed New World, which leans on Aaron Neville's Hercules for a rare glimpse of Shaolin soul ("People, we're like toddlers/When there's no love, the heart becomes more hollower"). Add in refreshed Wu-Tang tropes from Inspectah Deck, Masta Killa and a super-chilled Method Man and these tongue-twisting soirees amount to Ghost's best solo adventure since 2006's *Fishscale*.

*Andy Cowan*

## Mikal Cronin

★★★★

Seeker

MERGE. CD/DL/LP

**Ty Segall collaborator throws it all at breakthrough fourth solo waxing.**

From quirky garage origins, Cronin, now 33, here makes the big leap into grown-up alt-singer/songwriting, deploying fabulous strings, brass and electric guitar with invention truly befitting of the classic-rock era. In the four-plus years since 2015's *MCIII*, he's toured intensively with Ty Segall's Freedom Band. Facing burn-out, he shacked up in a SoCal mountain cabin to write alone once again, before arsonist-prompted wildfires drove him back to Los Angeles to record, the Freedom combo in tow. The opening Shelter resets his own bar high, as echoes of Led Zeppelin's Kashmir are transformed by darkly sensuous orchestration far from that song's familiar staccato punch. Some first-class guitar-playing surfaces in Fire's incendiary Tom Verlaine-esque solo, and the Dear Prudence-like chiming on I've Got Reason. Such embellishments frame soul-searching songs about dislocation and romantic ill-fortune – think a grittier Brendan Benson – which soon demand frequent revisits.

*Andrew Perry*

## Van Morrison

★★★★

Three Chords And The Truth

EXILE/CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL. CD/DL/LP

**Sir Van vigorously shakes more bees from his bonnet.**

Incredibly, with a sixth album in four years, the fire in Van's belly seems to intensify, not dissipate. The unexpected flurry of robust creativity launched by *Keep Me Singing* and *Roll With The Punches* growls to new levels of devilment as he gets various frustrations off his chest in a cantankerous collection. "Every clown wants to take you down," he sings on the infectious Fame Will Eat The Soul, including a terrific duet with Bill Medley, and declares that "human nature can't be trusted" on the sulky, meandering blues of You Don't Understand. But there's warmth, too, in his yearning nostalgia for vintage rock'n'roll on Early Days and the tender If We Wait For Mountains. Alongside Jay Berliner's guitar lines, meaty chunks of organ, grooves aplenty, vocals of surprising clarity and a soulful collection of new songs, it's a convincing performance.

*Colin Irwin*

## Cigarettes After Sex

★★★★

Cry

PARTISAN. CD/DL/LP

**Songs of aching ambience and sunset ennui from a Texan trio.**

While the general consensus seems to be that Cigarettes After Sex is very likely the worst band name ever imagined, the El Paso group's dream pop floats above such concerns. Recorded in Mallorca, *Cry* is a tad sturdier and more cinematic than their 2017 eponymous debut, the exotic location – for Americans – resulting in a production that sounds slightly sun-burned and coated in a thin layer of sand. Singer Greg Gonzalez's vocals remain curiously gender neutral, and the lovely, reverie-inducing Kiss It Off Me successfully locates the unexplored middle ground between Low and Beach House. Almost everything here sounds pre-designed for drone-shot driving sequences in a slow-burning indie film, but in a very good way. Ambient pop may be a crowded field but, against the odds, Cigarettes After Sex (once again… urgh) and their unique characteristics are unmistakable.

*Tom Doyle*

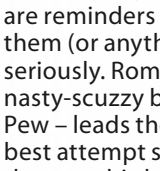
## Warmduscher

★★★★

Tainted Lunch

THE LEAF LABEL. CD/DL/LP

**Third set of badass grooves and worse-ass attitude from motley UK/US team.**



Warmduscher ("warm shower" in German – think about it) are a twig off The Fat White Family tree. Sideburned guitarist Adam J Harmer is a current Fat White; bassist Ben Romans-Hopcraft moonlights in Saul Adamczewski's Insecure Men, and the group shares a congenital disregard for sonic or sartorial propriety, while their *noms* de rock – Clams Baker, The Witherer – are reminders not to take them (or anything) too seriously. Romans-Hopcraft's nasty-scuzzy bass – think Tracy Pew – leads the way on their best attempt so far to translate the anarchic bar brawl of their live incarnation (the ubiquitous Dan Carey produces) where Baker's braggadocious brand of transatlantic street surrealism – imagine peak De Niro stewing in a Wetherspoons – is best paired with the toxic funk of Dream Lotion and the metallic Suicide disco of Blood Load. It's a compliment that guest spots by simpatico icons Iggy Pop and Kool Keith are by no means the best things here.

*Danny Eccleston*

Soul-searcher Mikal Cronin demands revisits.

Nick Cave: seeking peace in a troubled world.

# Love & mercy

The Bad Seeds' remarkable 17th album, "a migrating spirit", says **Nick Cave**. By **Victoria Segal**.

## Nick Cave And The Bad Seeds

★★★★★

Ghosteen

GHOSTEEN LTD/BAD SEED LTD. **CD/DL/LP**

ON HOLLYWOOD, the long, fractured track that closes this double album, Nick Cave retells the Buddhist story of a woman called Kisa. Distraught her baby is dying, she visits Buddha, who says the child can be revived if she collects a mustard seed from every house in her village, so long as the people within have been untouched by death. Not one household can provide what she needs. Kisa, understanding her quest is over, buries her baby in the forest.

The moral is clear: death is everywhere, behind every door and under every roof, not a distant stranger but a constant lodger. Since the terrible death of his 15-year-old son Arthur in 2015, Cave has spoken and written about how profoundly moving he has found other people's shared experiences of loss. That perhaps at least partly explains why he has made himself so visible, so accessible, in the last few years. On his Conversations With Nick Cave tour, he took questions from audiences on everything from grief and God to the location of the stopcock in his former Brighton flat. Meanwhile, his website, The Red Hand Files, lets him respond with care to the kind of queries more usually addressed to rabbis or priests: How long will I be alone? Do you believe in signs? "This," he says in the site's introduction, "will be between you and me. There will be no moderator."

It feels that this is the ideal operating method for *Ghosteen*, too, the Bad Seeds' first release since 2016's remarkable *Skeleton Tree*. Those songs sounded blasted with grief, despite being largely constructed before his son's death; *Ghosteen*, written once Cave could reconnect with his work in the aftermath of the tragedy, has more space around it. It still vibrates with Warren Ellis's ominous, cosmic-radiation synthesizers and loops, but *Ghosteen* – "a migrating spirit" Cave said in the announcement – is less tightly coiled and knotted. Waiting For You is related to *Skeleton's Tree*'s harrowing I Need You, yet it also feels like the rising wreck of an earlier Bad Seed ballad. Night Raid's poignant scene of new beginnings in a hotel room, complete with Cave's mocking laugh at his own on-the-nose imagery ("yeah, I know"), sounds like it was recorded by an open window above a rainy street. There is air coming in.

Lyrically, too, it feels Cave has pared back. There is a characteristic apocalyptic pall over these songs: there are rising sea creatures and black butterflies, children vanish into the sun on both Hollywood's end-times horror and Sun Forest's Blakean visions, but there's little as florid as the Hannah Montana-starring Higgs Boson Blues (from 2013's *Push The Sky Away*), or *Skeleton's Tree*'s Jesus Alone, with its lurid rogue doctors and Tijuana drug addicts. (Elvis Presley does appear, sombrely, on The Spinning Song – not with a Tupelo roar, but as an enduring consolation, emerging from the radio on a kitchen table.) Instead, there is the pensive Bright Horses, which begins with a vision of fiery manes, sadly acknowledges that "horses are just horses", then builds to a defence of faith: "Oh this world is plain to see/It don't mean we can't believe in something." It's a view picked up by the title track, one of two long songs that make up the second record (interspersed by almost-Shakespearean spoken word piece Fireflies): "There's nothing wrong with loving something you can't hold in your hand." Love is tangible across these songs: on Leviathan, over a submerged riff, Cave repeats "I love my baby/And my baby loves me", as if it's one demonstrable truth rising from the depths of a troubled mind, a troubled world.

Most astonishing, though, is the minimal thrum of Ghosteen Speaks. A swell of voices rise and fall, like they're pitching on a boat; there's a sharp, bright synthesizer line, and Cave's voice, repeating simple phrases that slowly spell out a dreadful, unutterably beautiful, scene. "I am beside you… look for me… I think my friends have gathered here for me". It's a difficult world, and there will be no moderator, but with *Ghosteen*, Cave finds a way to reach out, and reach through. Once again, it's between him and the universe.

US marine: Bonnie 'Prince' Billy seeks out calmer seas.

# Serenity now

Will Oldham finds peace amid the chaos. By **Victoria Segal**.

## Bonnie 'Prince' Billy

★★★★

I Made A Place

DOMINO. **CD/DL/LP**

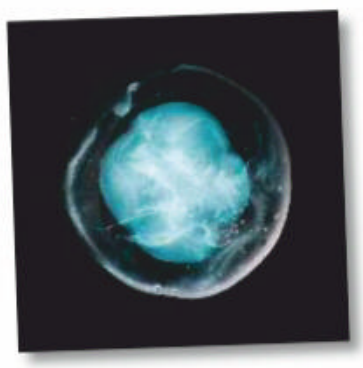
IF AUDIENCES on Bill Callahan and Will Oldham's 1996 joint tour had been asked where they imagined the artists winding up in future, they might have guessed hermit's cave, sanitorium – maybe down the mines. That 2019 would see these songwriters as family men, releasing some of the warmest, most immediate music of their careers – that would have been nobody's first guess.

Yet as the world sets the controls on its handcart, that's the position both appear to have assumed – as if by making itself so clear and present, the darkness has lost some power over them. If Callahan's latest record turned inwards, all dream symbolism and psychological revelation, *I Made A Place* looks out, telescope on the shore, trying to distinguish between beacons of hope and scorched-earth denial. This Is Far From Over strikes an ominous note – "Be sure you teach your kids to swim/And navigate by stars above/The fate of landlocked life is grim" – yet it also whittles a wooden-ship fantasy of watery civilisation, a child sailing on after her parents die. I Have Made A Place, meanwhile, testifies to one man's contentment as he surveys his modest riches, but beneath its warmth lies an ominous hint of human delusion and power-play: "I have many friends/And children call me master/I help older folks build fires/To warm their bones the faster." The hope is lovely, but as slippery as any of Oldham's previous iterations.

Since 2011's more austere *Wolfroy Goes To Town*, Oldham has worked on numerous covers projects – Merle Haggard, The Everly Brothers, even his own songs to tie-in with the collected lyrics book Songs Of Love And Horror. This collection and curation matches *I Made A Place*'s concern with legacy and preservation, with hanging on and letting go.

The end-times hoarding of "séance gear and kimchi jars" on non-album single At The Back Of The Pit is here echoed by the "cookie jar" of Dream Awhile, a gentle meditation on comfort, denial, the problems of living amid global meltdown. New Memory Box, almost too jubilant, recommends a Marie Kondo-like mind clearance, jettisoning the past like "fish hooks and rocks". Nothing Is Busted, meanwhile, clings to the idea of unmarred perfection existing somewhere beyond life's "moth-eaten blankets and broken machines". The music, too, feels marked and foxed by human contact: clarinet and flute, harmonium and saxophone, Joan Shelley's unbleached-calico backing vocals.

It's really a nightmare world Oldham describes, but he cloaks it in tender beauty, sleight-of-hand that remodels human failure into heartening endurance, a consoling story against the cold. "This particular assemblage of molecules and memories/May someday soon just run out of gas," Oldham sings on visionary fable Look Backwards On Your Future, Look Forward To Your Past, but in the face of obsolescence, *I Made A Place* stands strong.



Christian Hansen

## A Winged Victory For The Sullen

★★★★

The Undivided Five

NINJA TUNE. **CD/DL/LP**

**Hirsute neoclassical duo's harmonic pursuit of the perfect fifth chord.**

Ever since they met backstage at a 2007 Sparklehorse show, Dustin O'Halloran and Stars Of The Lid drone-meister Adam Wiltzie have developed an alchemical signature chamber style, fusing pitter-patter piano, sampled strings and swooshing ambient guitars. Here, inspired by the death of a close friend and the birth of O'Halloran's first child, they set out their stall on elegiac 10-minute opener Our Lord Debussy, its contemplative piano figure a deceptive building block for bolder vistas intricately traced in resounding symphonic sweeps. A similar fidelity to micro detail abounds through Sullen Sonata's slow stirring strings, Aqualung Motherfucker's beatless minor chord crush and Adios, Florida's ever-morphing sonic manoeuvres, somehow melancholic and warm. Closer listens reveal small universes of movement, tension and suspense pulsing just beneath the surface.

*Andy Cowan*

## The Desert Sessions

★★★★

Volumes 11 & 12

IPECAC. **CD/DL/LP**

**King Queen Of The Stone Age Josh Homme and not-so-heavy friends.**

The latest collaboration in Josh Homme's ongoing musical love-in finds ZZ Top's guitar honcho Billy Gibbons, lapsed Scissor Sister Jake Shears and Acid Jazzer/comic actor Matt Berry joining the party at Joshua Tree's Rancho De La Luna. It's a marginally more mainstream affair than 2003's *Volumes 9 & 10* (created with P.J. Harvey and various Marilyn Manson/A Perfect Circle alumni). Homme and friends have cooked up a lysergic brew of dust-blown ballads, thumping punk rock and shimmery psychedelia. The jarring stylistic clash is often part of the charm, and the only misstep here is the self-indulgent Chic Tweetz, co-written with Berry. Among the highlights are Billy Gibbons' voice and air-raid siren guitar on Move Together, Far East From The Trees' Calexico-style mariachi pop, and the charmingly spooked-sounding If You Run. Another two worthy chapters in the story, then.

*Mark Blake*

## The Good Ones

★★★★

Rwanda, You Should Be Loved

ANTI . **CD/DL/LP**

**Harmonies and farming tools – potent hilltop folk from Rwanda.**

This third album by the trio marks the 25th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide which saw the slaughter of over a million people in 100 days. Ethnic division is still rife there, but The Good Ones – comprising the Tutsi, Hutu and Twa tribes in their line-up – show by example there is more profit in peace than war. They call their music "worker songs from the streets", and acoustic by default – there's no electricity where they live – they record it on singer/guitarist Adrien Kazigira's farm. The songs about hurt, hardship but also hope (Young People Are The Future is a truly moving moment) are sung in raspy voices with sparse guitar and farming tools used as percussion. Kevin Shields, Nels Cline and other indie guitarists guest, their minimal (to the point of being almost undetectable) input presumably for marketing rather than creative purposes.

*Lois Wilson*

## Wet Tuna

★★★★

Water Weird

THREE-LOBED RECORDINGS. **CD/DL/LP**

**Horizontal hippy grooves of the New Weird America.**

Back in MOJO 309, MOJO's Buried Treasure column alighted on a small classic of astrally-reconfigured folk music from 2004, P.G. Six's *The Well Of Memory*. "A part of me fantasised about being a sideman on people's albums," mused Pat 'P.G. Six' Gubler, surveying an abandoned solo career. Now, though, he is first-call guy on the US Eastern seaboard for a litany of jam-inclined underground groups, among them Garcia Peoples (heard on this month's MOJO CD), Weeping Bong Band and the fabulous Wet Tuna, where he figures alongside longtime lo-fi acid facilitator Matt 'MV' Valentine. *Water Weird*, the second Tuna set, is a step up from last year's choogling *Livin' The Die*: freakier and funnier, not least on Cowpath 40 – J Mascis meets Eddie Hazel in an algae-ridden floatation tank, very roughly – when Valentine appears to quote, of all things, Snap's deathless Rhythm Is A Dancer; "Serious as cancer!"

*John Mulvey*

## Boduf Songs

★★★★

Abyss Versions

ORINDAL. **DL/LP**

**Doom-folk balladeer's seventh album.**

From Southampton but based in Ohio, Mat Sweet originally recorded for US indie Kranky, and shares a penchant for biblical drama with ex-labelmates Godspeed You! Black Emperor; hence song-titles such as Behold, I Have Graven Thee Upon The Palms Of My Hands, Thy Walls Are Continually Before Me. But musically, Sweet is the opposite of Godspeed You! dynamics, at least under Boduf Songs (other aliases, such as Map Of Hell, take different approaches). He's an Elliott Smith bleached of wistfulness, a Current 93 minus the occult leanings, inwardly murmuring more than singing the likes of "Black nails/Unravelling/Teeth on limb." In Sweet's abyss, ember-flickers of guitar and electronics (including a drum machine mixed way back) are his sole companions, but the effect is hypnotic, as soothing as it is downcast, a perfect abandon-all-hope missive from what sounds like the bottom of the world.

*Martin Aston*

## Josienne Clarke

★★★★

Learning To Sail

ROUGH TRADE. **CD/DL/LP**

**Folkster cuts ties and starts anew. Beautifully.**

Though half of a duo beloved on the folk circuit, with five albums of dusky melancholy behind them, a year ago Clarke left duo partner and boyfriend, Ben Walker, and London, moving to Scottish island Bute. And here she is, solo, with a clutch of moving haikus, all very short and direct, about how to right your boat when the sea's been choppy, free to chart your own course. Which means the title track is dramatic, bare, a slow, cynical blues on staying stable. Leaving London has her keening like a kelpie, desperate for her island; If I Didn't Mind, hipster indie pop about leaving a fucked-up relationship ("I've never known frustration like this in my life"). Knowing, experimental, hopeful, ironic, this could be Mary Margaret O'Hara – wringing your heart, engaging your brain.

*Glyn Brown*

## Miranda Lambert

★★★★

Wildcard

SONY. **CD/DL**

**Unique modern country voice rediscovers her bite.**

As likely to break someone's face in a song as she is their heart, Miranda Lambert's enduring appeal has long been predicated on razor-sharp writing and the cyclonic force of her Texan swagger. The latter trait was notably muted on 2016's double-album *The Weight Of These Wings* – a record processing her divorce from fellow country star Blake Shelton. *Wildcard*, however, marks a brilliant reassertion of Lambert's magnetic wit. Look no further than when she unites with Maren Morris to gleefully invert Dixie Chicks' revenge fantasy Goodbye Earl on Way Too Pretty For Prison. In this form, even a misstep like Tequila Does boasts enough charisma to elevate it above other baptised-in-booze country anthems. Far more gripping are Bluebird and Settling Down: delicate, bruised yet defiant, they are two of her finest songs to date.

*George Garner*

## Judy Collins & Jonas Fjeld

★★★★

Winter Stories

WILDFLOWER & CLEOPATRA. **CD/DL**

**A folk legend discovered in reflective mood.**

Earlier this year Judy Collins, Norwegian folk star Jonas Fjeld and bluegrass band Chatham County Line took over a North Carolina church that had been converted into a studio. The set they recorded includes rollicking bluegrass, but the emphasis is on narrative ballads. Now in her 80th year, Collins is taking stock. She plucks a few songs from her back catalogue, such as The Fallow Way and The Blizzard, but is most resonant in her interpretation of others' work. Joni Mitchell's River, for instance, with its drifting melancholy, while Jimmy Webb's Highwayman becomes a feisty survival anthem. Fjeld provides a husky, respectful harmony to her silvery voice, but doesn't absent himself. Their eloquent duet on Frozen North is one of the strongest, most graceful tracks on here.

*Lucy O'Brien*

## Tindersticks

★★★

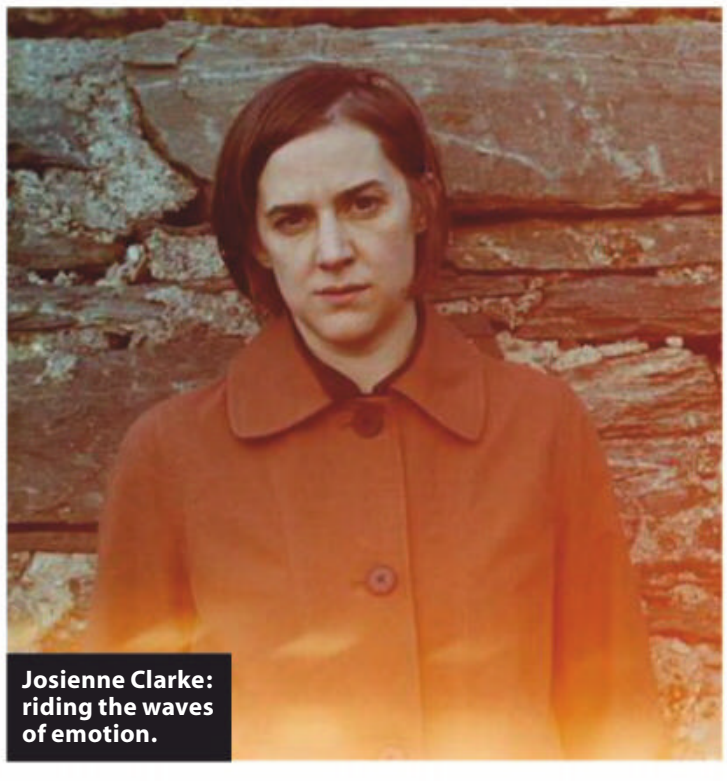
No Treasure But Hope

CITY SLANG. **CD/DL/LP**

**First album in three years from stately Nottingham chamber pop outfit.**

After over a quarter of a century toiling lugubriously, it's clear what a Tindersticks LP will bring: Stuart Staples' throaty vocals; lush, chamber backdrops and the sense that the world can be a lonely place. Although Staples has moved to the Greek island of Ithaca, there are no major surprises and *No Treasure But Hope* is a further refinement of what they've been doing in the past. Yet, they're not standing still and there are subtle twists, not least more changes of pace than was formerly the case. The exquisite Take Care In Your Dreams is so delicate it almost floats away, while the outstanding See My Girls bounces along, part modern-day madrigal, part Leonard Cohen's Jazz Police, and For The Beauty pivots around Dan McKinna's Satie-like piano. It's too late for revolution, but Tindersticks are proving masters of evolution.

*John Aizlewood*



Ellius Grace, Cat Stevens

**Josienne Clarke: riding the waves of emotion.**

# FOLK

BY COLIN IRWIN

## Lankum

★★★★★

The Livelong Day

ROUGH TRADE. **CD/DL/LP**

**Fearlessly exposing the underbelly of Irish tradition.**

ONE OF Lankum's spiciest early quotes was that folk is more punk than punk, and the point is made with fearless intensity on an album that defies every popular perception of Irish music. Who else would even think of opening with an 11-minute version of the hackneyed old bar ballad The Wild Rover? But, stripping it of all banality, they uncover the song's grim desperation without a thought that its droney starkness might strain impatient ears. There's an equally slow fuse on Ian Lynch's seven-minute The Young People – one of only two non-trad songs – but its subtle build into something grandly anthemic is brilliant. They approach the tradition with an awe and wonder that especially percolates into the instrumentals – Ode To Lullaby is practically psychedelic and the eerie intro leading into Radie Peat's frankly scary vocals on Katie Cruel could be straight out of a Hitchcock movie. Their most extreme statement yet.

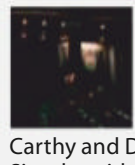
## ALSO RELEASED

### Jim Moray

★★★★

The Outlander

MANAGED DECLINE. **CD/DL/LP**



This so clearly evokes the early folk revival spirit, it's practically a homage to Martin Carthy and Dave Swarbrick. Simple, wide-eyed, entirely traditional, its percussive, stripped-down form also has moments of quiet instrumental invention. Josienne Clarke duets on Lord Gregory and the familiarity of the material – John Barleycorn, When This Old Hat Was New, The Leaving Of Liverpool, etc – scarcely demeans its warmth.

### Luke Daniels

★★★★

Old Friends & Exhausted Enemies

WREN. **CD/DL**

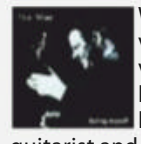
Rightly recognised for his instrumental guitar/piano virtuosity and experimental ideas, Luke Daniels diversifies further, incorporating the poetry of Chaucer, Burns, Browning, Auden and others into his strong songwriting. Additional gravity comes from bass and drums (Jenny Hill, Signy Jacobsdottir) plus intriguing additions (strings, a choir and Chinese zither). It's a bold voyage into literary history that evolves into something challengingly contemporary.

### Tim Edey

★★★

Being Myself

GNATBITE. **CD/DL**



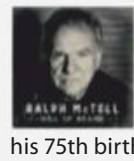
With fulsome virtuosity and versatility, Edey has long established himself as both a guitarist and box player with a free-flowing natural talent. Ranging from a Django-esque version of Gershwin's They Can't Take That Away From Me to traditional tunes and his own compositions, his strength is nerveless instinct. A smattering of accompanists assist his path, which encompasses a couple of less assured originals, but his warmth and integrity still count for plenty.

### Ralph McTell

★★★

Hill Of Beans

LEOLA. **CD/DL**




McTell continues to craft meaningful songs and deliver them with confident surety approaching his 75th birthday. His voice is as clear and inviting as ever and, reunited here with producer Tony Visconti half a century after the pair made *Eight Frames A Second*, adds a certain piquancy to human songs that carry more than a flicker of nostalgia and personal reflection. An old-school singer-songwriter album, but with this guy you wouldn't want anything else. *CI*

Springing a surprise: Itasca's Kayla Cohen.

# Special source

Three years after her acclaimed debut, Kayla Cohen returns with an album of ambient beauty and ancient mystery. By **Andrew Male**.

## Itasca

★★★★

Spring

PARADISE OF BACHELORS. **CD/DL/LP**

IN 2017, Los Angeles singer-songwriter Kayla Cohen left the city to live in a 100-year-old adobe house in rural New Mexico. This decision to drop out, in response to both the current political climate and her own "personal chaos", inevitably fed into her new album. Inspired by fellow artist-travellers Terry Allen, Georgia O'Keeffe and Bruce Nauman who found inspiration in this unique Native American landscape, and titled after both the season of rebirth and her new environment's rare water sources, *Spring* is an album of deep spirits and scorched nature, a place of fragile security, but also deep discovery.

At its bare bones – Cohen's voice and Dave McPeters' keening pedal steel – the sound remains identifiable from 2016's *Open To Chance*, but with brushed drums from Gun Outfit's Daniel Swire, Sun Araw's Marc Riordan on keyboards, and with string arrangements by James Elkington, this is a far more hallucinatory affair, a desert country waltz of unreality that feels simultaneously haunting and heavenly.

The album's opening track, Lily, begins "100 miles past the end of the highway", Cohen's cotton-brushed siren vocals and fingerpicked guitar overlaid by shimmering sonic textures and country strings, suggestive of heat hazes and waking dreams.

Informed by the history of this ancient New Mexico landscape (Cohen lives near Chaco Canyon, a Native American architectural complex from the 12th century), and her own recent past, *Spring* functions as a dream-travelogue, waltz-like compositions that begin as certain quests with specific locations – the search for a water source or canyon river – yet dissolve into afternoon mirages, or, as on the seductive Bess's Dance, find her waylaid by jesters and satyrs, the temptations and memories of her past crowding the route of these curative journeys.

Similarly, Cohen's feathered vocals don't always reach for clarity, but whisper like words on the edge of sleep, chasing for meaning. Occasionally, as on standout tracks such as Blue Spring and Golden Fields, the feeling is different, as if the imagistic poetry of the late '60s Lauren Canyon ladies were melding into floating peyote mood pieces, where hippy LA aphorisms of love and freedom are borne away by these Native American spirits.

Engineered by Bitchin' Bajas' Cooper Crain, *Spring* is, ultimately an ambient album, an intimate listening experience of transformation but also uncertainty, attuned to the dead voices and silences of these ancient landscapes and the young woman who now inhabits them. Mercurial and avian, it is a hazy path through a dusty landscape of sadness and enlightenment that never arrives at answers or certainties, but shimmers with an eternal mystery.

Hans F Wagner

## Anna Of The North

★★★★

Dream Girl

PLAY IT AGAIN SAM. **CD/DL/LP**

**Oslo-based electronic pop artist blossoms with her second album.**

Anna Of The North (AKA Anna Lotterud) made her mark in 2017 with debut album *Lovers*, and a feature on Tyler, The Creator's slow jam single Boredom. Despite the warm, organic timbre to her voice, Anna rather disappeared on *Lovers*, an easy-flowing yet muted break-up album. With this follow-up she sings with much more energy and self-definition, boosted by a grittier mix of boomy '80s-style soul/pop and trip-hoppy textures courtesy of producers like Patrick Wimberly (Solange) and Askjell Solstrand (Sigrid). Each song charts a step away from former love to living alone and free – which, when it comes near the end of the album, makes the softly whispered remorse of Reasons, her duet with Norwegian indie artist Charlie Skien, quietly devastating.

*Lucy O'Brien*

## Dog In The Snow

★★★

Vanishing Lands

BELLA UNION. **CD/DL/LP**

**Helen Ganya Brown's second long-player, an end-of-times dream.**

At home in Brighton, Brown, who takes her stage name from Franz Kafka's prescient novel The Trial, wrote the bulk of *Vanishing Lands* after a series of dreams about a "dreamland" that was being destroyed. The resulting album sounds suitably distraught and jittery, echoing the rich gothic drama of '80s post-punk, with occasional use of cold fire electronics on such as Icaria underlining the dystopian feel. But there are tunes within these ruins, echoing the airier swirl of '90s dream pop and, on Dark, Kate Bush. Lyrically, *Vanishing Lands* unfolds in a dreamlike manner with recurring lyrical motifs like 'obscura', 'gold' and 'empire'. There is just one polemical statement, in Fall Empire, which cites the 1982 environmental documentary Koyaanisqatsi: "If we did dig precious things from the land, we will invite disaster".

*Martin Aston*

## La Féline

★★★

Vie Future

KWAIDAN. **CD/DL/LP**

**The final part of Agnès Gayraud's existential pop trilogy.**

*Vie Future* is full of Agnès Gayraud's musings on good and evil, and the cycles of birth and death that have affected her personally. She has also recently published a book, Dialectique De La Pop. All of which indicates that although it opens with the sunny '60s-influenced single Palmiers Sauvages, this is going to be more substantial than a mere pop soufflé. She adds more subtle, darker hues to these primary colours on Fusée, with its low, downward-arcing strings and synth lines, and occasional saxophone scribbles over chattering beats, while the rhythmically animated Tant Que Tu Respires rides out on rippling keyboard lines. The mood becomes melancholic on the eerie Voyage À Cythère, a slow procession of piano chords, distant voices and electronic currents. There's a lot to unravel here, especially for non-French speakers, but musically it's melodically rich and beautifully sung throughout.

*Mike Barnes*

## Underworld

★★★★

DRIFT Series 1: Sampler Edition

CAROLINE. **CD/DL/LP**

**Karl Hyde and Rick Smith's 52-week epic distilled into 58 minutes.**

In an age of overwhelming cultural choices, Underworld's project to release a song a week online for the past year has been profligate, self-indulgent and, against the odds, hugely satisfying: a validation that quantity does not militate against quality. The whole collection has now been crammed into seven CDs, but the simultaneous release of this *Sampler Edition* is a handy 58-minute entry point for newcomers to the mad endeavour. *DRIFT*'s expansiveness is impossible to capture here – the Necks collaboration, Appleshine Continuum, would take up three-quarters of the running time by itself. But *Sampler* actually works as a terrific conventional Underworld album: streamlined technoglides; meticulously constructed peaks; quasi-ambient passages that never derail the forward thrust; and one classic Hyde babble-anthem, S T A R (Rebel Tech), that namechecks Ayrton Senna, Nye Bevan and Rosa Parks in a deadpan cascade of political inspirations and pop cultural ephemera.

*John Mulvey*

# JAZZ

BY ANDY COWAN

## Arp

★★★★

Ensemble – Live!

MEXICAN SUMMER. CD/DL/LP

**Cosmic electronica man finds himself in Fourth World jazz.**

Who'd have guessed, a few years ago, that the way out of the electronica hinterlands for some brave explorers would be via jazz? San Francisco's Alexis Georgopoulos has been making decent, kosmische-inclined records for a while now, as Arp and in various other semi-visible projects like The Alps. Last year's *Zebra* album, however, marked a bold new phase: a Fourth World jazz excursion strongly influenced by Jon Hassell's *Vernal Equinox* and Miles's *In A Silent Way*. Clearly aware he's onto a good thing, *Ensemble – Live!* finds Georgopoulos wisely expanding on the idea, bringing a five-piece band to jam live in the studio on three *Zebra* tracks – the squelchy groove of Nzuku especially flourishes – and four more tunes with a similar humid vibe. Spiritual in ambience, supple in performance (David Lackner on sax and flute is outstanding), it's a brilliant exposition of how to put flesh on the bones of abstract music; a transitional album that's actually a career high.

*John Mulvey*

## Ben LaMar Gay

★★★

East Of The Ryan

INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM. DL

**Chicago cornetist creates soundtrack for the local hotel of his childhood dreams.**

East Of The Ryan is a hotel on the south side of Chicago that hosts steppin' nights, playing everything from '70s Chi-town soul to New Jack Swing. But in the youthful imagination of Ben LaMar Gay it was a magical place where strange rituals took place. One night in 2014, armed with banks of effects, keyboards and many instruments, LaMar Gay, drummer Tommaso Moretti, post-jazz avant-gardist JayVe Montgomery and sound mixer Ed Bornstein, attempted to recreate those adolescent head-trip sounds. From the squelchy sci-fi drone-funk of the opener, Dipped, this is no regular player's ball. Robot-voiced free gospel rattles around flying saucer building sites, a gamelan garden is invaded by drum machines and distended Ellington melodies, and bird-voiced spiritual jazz explodes into a downtown noise gig. The hotel was playing Levert; LaMar Gay was hearing the universe.

*Andrew Male*

## Lightning Bolt

★★★

Sonic Citadel

THRILL JOCKEY. CD/DL/LP

**Hockey-masked Rhode Island noisenik duo grow up.**

Often blitzing their audience from within by performing on venue floors rather than on-stage, Lightning Bolt always ran the risk of being pegged as insubstantial, if not a novelty act. Yet, still going strong (and extra loud!) after 25 years, their chaotic MO loses none of its gonzo appeal, particularly on record, where their initially staunch no-fi aesthetic has softened just sufficiently to allow light, shade and even catchy tunes into the mix. No one ever doubted sticksman Brian Chippendale's chops, and opener here Blow To The Head rockets off as if propelled by an army of Slayer's Dave Lombardos, while Brian Gibson metes out distorto-bass riffs that somehow bridge metal, thrash and virtuoso prog. The brilliantly-titled Hüsker Dön't sounds like ELP busting out opera beneath a mountain of sludge, while All Insane, with its slower beat and amenably zany Gibby Haynes-esque vocals, summons the unforeseen notion of Stadium 'Bolt. They remain ridiculous, but thunderingly good fun.

*Andrew Perry*

Helena Wolfenson, Peter Van Breukelen

**Sessa AKA Sérgio Sayeg embraces greatness.**

## Sessa

★★★

Grandeza

RISCO/BOILED. CD/DL/LP

**Former Garotas Suecas member salutes Brazilian musical prototypes.**

*Grandeza* – Portuguese for greatness – begins woozily with its title track, a melding of pitter-pat hand percussion, Tom Jobim-style acoustic guitar, massed female backing vocals and a lead voice initially crooning about "my greatness," which soon extends to "my greatness sings". *Grandeza* balances celebrating the self with saucer-eyed explorations of the personal attributes of others: blood, a flower as a proxy body part. Sessa is the commentator. Better known as Sérgio Sayeg, he was guitarist in Brazilian band Garotas Suecas whose psych-leaning albums patch together funk, '60s pop and home-grown Tropicália. His first solo album isn't so magpie-minded, but suggests he's been paying attention to Jorge Ben gently embracing freak-dom and the Caetano Veloso of 1972's fragmented *Araçá Azul*.

*Kieron Tyler*

## Xylouris White

★★★★

The Sisypheans

DRAG CITY. CD/DL/LP

**Questing union of lute and percussion ponders wider contexts of human activity.**

In Greek myth, the Corinthian King Sisyphus's punishment for chicanery was eternally rolling a rock up a hill. For their fourth album, Jim White and George Xylouris look beyond such torment with eight song-stories addressing the idea that no matter what you do, the world similarly carries on with its own – also eternal – cycles. The last album from the Dirty Three's percussionist and the Cretan lauto (an oud-like lute) player was the frenetic *Mother*. By contrast, *The Sisypheans* is measured and reflective. So much so that Goat Hair Bow hoves in and out of view as if subjected to Doppler effect. But intensity is not lost: the modal Telephone Song resonates with the power of *Led Zeppelin III*'s dip into Eastern tonalities. Crucially, this Greek-sung refraction of the traditional shares its core outlook with tough hard rock.

*Kieron Tyler*

## Shake Stew

★★★★

Gris Gris

TRAUMTON. CD/DL/LP

**Hypnotic Afrobeats power Austrian septet's expansive third album.**

TERRIBLE NAME aside, there's nothing remotely humdrum about Shake Stew. This seemingly unbalanced band – two drummers, two bassists, three horns – founded by opera-writing polymath Lukas Kranzelbinder have forged a fierce reputation for sprawling sets that nod to the '60s spiritual jazz of Alice Coltrane and Pharoah Sanders undercut with Sons Of Kemet's interlocking rhythmic fluidity. If those parallels are apparent amid the full force of I Can Feel The Heat Closing In and slow-burning, spectral progressions of So He Spoke, the 33-minute Grilling Crickets In A Straw Hut is different level, as guesting guitarist Tobias Hoffmann and flute-wielding resident Johannes Schleiermacher soar above Kranzelbinder's boombastically grooving guembri. Able to blind you into a trance *and* make you dance down to your knees, *Gris Gris* twists, blisters and burns like a fevered dream.

## ALSO RELEASED

### Ben Bryden

★★★★

Figure Of Eight

CIRCAVISION. CD/DL

Last spotted reworking fellow Scot Ivor Cutler's prickly melodics, this New York-based tenor saxophonist showcases his compositional smarts and a beckoning tone across laments for failed relationships and his homeland that brim with passion and yearning. The rough and tumble with guitarist Phil Robson peaks on a sprint through Billy Joel's She's Always A Woman, but Bryden's thoughtful originals ace the pack.

### Led Bib

★★★★

It's Morning

RARENOISE. CD/DL/LP

Punk-jazz pioneers Led Bib channel improvisational chemistry anew on an ever-evolving song cycle, anchored by the addition of North Sea Radio Orchestra's mezzo-soprano Sharron Fortnam. Their talents coalesce on the 11-minute Fold – a flip through an old FM radio dial that bristles and broods with atmospheric shifts. The reined-in approach succeeds in making their full-tilt moments more malevolently powerful than ever.

### Various

★★★

Kraut Jazz Futurism

KRYPTOX. CD/DL/LP

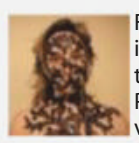
Shake Stew are probably the best-known act on this far-reaching insight to Berlin's neu-jazz and Krautfunk scene. Catering to broad tastes, highs include the beguiling Eastern motifs of Karaba's synth wizard Andreas Kainz, C.A.R.'s driving arpeggios and helicoptering oscillations, Sissi Rada's harp harmonics, Niklas Wandt's beat brutalism, and Ralph Heidel's meditative chamber jazz.

### Alice Zawadzki

★★★★

Within You Is A World Of Spring

WHIRLWIND. CD/DL/LP



Folk and classical influences intertwine on this Anglo-Polish singer and violinist's second. Zawadzki's larynx is a supple, expressive, rousing delight, its harmonic flexibility tested by folkloric tales sensually scored by the Amika string quartet. Whether getting old school jiggy with it (Es Verdad) or delving into dramatic vocalese (Twisty Moon), she proves as maverick as Fever Ray or Joanna Newsome. Expect the unexpected. AC

The Who: Pete (left) and Roger, not going quietly.

# Who's last?

Townshend and Daltrey go down fighting on possible swansong release. By **Mark Blake**.

## The Who

★★★★

WHO

UNIVERSAL. **CD/DL/LP**

"IN THE end, every leader becomes a clown," suggests Pete Townshend, via Roger Daltrey, on Hero Ground Zero, the sixth song on *WHO*. The group's latest essays the world around us, in all its seriousness, and, with the next line, "Every rock star wants to make a movie", its trivialities. Pete Townshend has been voicing his audience's hopes and fears since 1964, but it seems more poignant than ever on what might be The Who's sign-off.

*WHO*'s predecessor, 2006's *Endless Wire*, strove hard for the gravitas of a *Tommy* or *Quadrophenia*. There's no such pretence here, and it's all the more meaningful for that. All This Music Must Fade's opening statement, "I don't care, I know you're gonna hate this song", suggests Townshend throwing down the gauntlet to himself, Daltrey and anybody else who wants some. On the surface, these 11 songs are unconnected, but everything here is linked, by themes of anger, insecurity or vulnerability. On 1975's *The Who By Numbers*, the then 30-year-old Townshend worried he was too old to be a pop star. Really, this is the long-overdue follow-up.

The music, slickly produced by Dave Sardy, is front-loaded with slashing guitars, busy drums and even an echo of Magic Bus on one song, Detour. A title like Rockin' In Rage chills the bowels, but any puffed-up swagger is underpinned by its confessional lyrics: "I'm too old to fight… I'm way past my prime…". It's Townshend and Daltrey as knackered prize-fighters both trying to land one last knockout punch.

Musicians writing and singing about being in their seventies is a rare thing in the Peter Pan world of rock – but The Who do it exceptionally well. Ball And Chain's stormy blues rails at social injustice; the orchestral Beads On One String preaches world peace, and Street Song suggests the protagonist of Won't Get Fooled Again raging against the dying of the light. Meanwhile, the Townshend-sung curio I'll Be Back is so off-piste you can't help admiring him for having the guts to include it. But then as he himself growls at the end of All This Music Must Fade: "Who gives a fuck?" If there was ever a time for an iffy Stevie Wonder-style harmonica solo on a Who album, it's now.

The Who don't do conventional love songs; instead of boy meets girl, it's more mum makes boy *dress* as girl. Wonders will never cease, then, and the closing tango, She Rocked My World, almost comes close. It's love, lust and longing, through the eyes of men too gnarly and cynical to fully buy into the dream. How reassuring to know that even at this late hour of the day, The Who will not go quietly.

## Grand Slam

★★★

Hit The Ground

MARSHALL. **CD/DL/LP**

**Phil Lynott's post-Thin Lizzy group rebooted.**

After Thin Lizzy's demise, bandleader Phil Lynott formed Grand Slam with Brit guitarist Laurence Archer. Lynott's death in 1985 marked the end – until now. *Hit The Ground* is divided between new(ish) material composed by the current group and six early-'80s Lynott co-writes, all with new vocalist Mike Dyer filling those unfillable shoes. Long-time Lizzy watchers will recognise some tracks, as Lynott either recorded them solo (19) or with guitarist Gary Moore (Military Man) while cheekily forgetting to credit Archer and Grand Slam keyboard player Mark Stanway. Fittingly, the new Gone Are The Days purloins a lyric from Lizzy's Jailbreak, perhaps as payback. You can't see the join between the old and new: both repurpose Phil and co's macho swagger and pop smarts. Album number two will prove if Grand Slam are more than a redux Lynott/Lizzy tribute, but right now *Hit The Ground* offers good nostalgic fun.

*Mark Blake*

## Pan American

★★★★

A Son

KRANKY. **CD/DL/LP**

**Persuasive return to first principles from the Labradford stalwart.**

Recorded in his Evanston, Illinois home, *A Son* finds Mark Nelson recalibrating his long-standing Pan American alias, dialling down the gauzy electronics of yore in favour of an uncluttered, semi-acoustic signature, with prominent use of languid, spiralling guitar melodies and liminal, semi-spoken vocals that recall his contributions to '90s post-rock outliers Labradford. Beat-less, languorous but involving standouts like Memphis Helena, with its plangent lead line intimately tracked by Nelson's hushed, hazy intoning ("I'm a long way from home"), and elegiac, rippling acoustic guitar-propelled Muriel Spark are as inexorable and immersive as a high-summer sunset. Then fizzing hammered dulcimer interlude Kept Quiet effortlessly weds backwoods Appalachia to the ambient cloudscapes of Laraaji. Contemplative reveries like the self-explanatory Sleepwalk Guitars and elegantly brooding Dark Birds Empty Fields, meanwhile, summon the work of Loren Connors or Tom Verlaine's instrumental *chef-d'oeuvre*, *Warm And Cool*.

*David Sheppard*

## Ringo Starr

★★★

What's My Name

UMC. **CD/LP**

**Peace, love, mild immodesty and a backbeat: Brand Ringo, as ever.**

For late work with a pressing sense of mortality and the wisdom thereof, Zevon, Cohen and Bowie are your guys. Though Ringo at 79 has life lessons to impart, they would fit on a T-shirt in that 1968 head shop urging us to Keep On Truckin'. Life Is Good, Send Love Spread Peace, Gotta Get Up To Get Down, Thank God For Music… all get my vote, but beyond their titles the songs do little more than rhyme. More nitty-gritty, a cover of the early Motown hit Money (That's What I Want) ain't a patch on the Fabs' cover version on *With The Beatles*, while Lennon's Grow Old With Me, featuring Macca on bass and bee-vees, confirms that Big Bad John was quite capable of his own 'granny shit' in later years. But it all thumps along agreeably with a brio seldom found in rock today by artists a quarter of his age.

*Mat Snow*

## The Sensational Barnes Brothers

★★★★

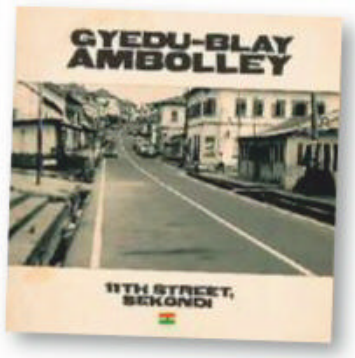
Nobody's Fault But My Own

BIBLE & TIRE RECORDING CO. **CD/DL/LP**

**Definitely not 'the same old gospel crap'.**

The Sensational Barnes Brothers are Chris and Courtney Barnes, the sons of former Raelette Deborah Gleese Barnes and Calvin 'Duke' Barnes, a successful gospel duo from Memphis. Signed to Fat Possum's gospel offshoot, the siblings pay tribute to the little-known label Designer, which issued some 500 gospel 45s between 1968 and '78. The brief was to deliver "gospel as dancing music", and it is just that, brimful of energy, vitality and intensity. 'Duke' Barnes joins in on the poignant Let It Be Good, made all the more so when he died soon after the recording; Why Am I Treated So Bad is framed in bluesy funk; I Feel Good moves on up with sweetness and soul. The message throughout is making it over. That struggle, whether spiritual or something more earth-bound, is something we can all connect with.

*Lois Wilson*




## Gyedu-Blay Ambolley

★★★★

11th Street, Sekondi

AGOGO. CD/DL/LP

**Sparkling new album from a highlife great.**

As a drummer, guitarist and vocalist, Gyedu-Blay Ambolley played in some of Ghana's premier highlife groups during the 1960s, being mentored by Sammy Lartey in the Railway Band, along with Ebo Taylor, who shifted Ambolley to bass. Debut solo album, *Simigwa Do*, introduced raw funk, rap and disco elements to the Ghanaian music scene, cementing Ambolley's status as a pioneer, and his saxophone and vocal skills went on to influence the champea style of black Colombian music in the '70s. Maintaining a fairly steady recording schedule in later decades, this new LP finds the septuagenarian in fine form, as assured, original and relevant as ever. Songs like Brokos rebuff maltreatment to a relaxed highlife groove, while Ignorance is a hot Afrobeat decrying foreign views of Africa. The backing remains stellar throughout and Ambolley totally resplendent.

*David Katz*

## Fitted

★★★

First Fits

ORG MUSIC. CD/DL/LP

**Debut outing from the alt-rock 'supergroup', of a sort.**

In 2017 Bob Lee – AKA Bobzilla in Fearless Leader – announced on social media that he was to play at Wire's Drill festival in LA with that band's bassist Graham Lewis and guitarist Matthew Simms, and Mike Watt, former bassist with The Stooges, Minutemen and fIREHOSE. He reckoned that after a single rehearsal their existence might be "about 10 hours". Not so. Far from a simple extension of that evening's spontaneous workouts, *First Fits* veers from the juggernaut momentum of Plug In The Jug, sung by Watt, to the syncopated shuffle of Training Pitbulls For The Navy, with Lewis intoning in his near-croon. The drums are crisp and basses bedded in, with Lewis often opting for "FX bass" and samples. Simms relishes the space, picking out melodic patterns or using a particularly abrasive fuzz tone on the speedy, poppy Magically Blessed.

*Mike Barnes*

## Julien Chang

★★★★

Jules

TRANSGRESSIVE. CD/DL/LP

**From Baltimore: a new wizard, a true star.**

Julien Chang was 17 when he began making this debut album in his basement. *Jules*'s intro, Deep Green, is delicate prog-soul with an airy vocal: echoes of Floyd, Rundgren, Air and Tame Impala. Of The Past follows, its silken funk unravelling a piano solo that could be Bowie's sidekick Mike Garson, and Chang is revealed as a teenage prodigy-cum-visionary. His wunderkind status is underlined by an obvious passion for Brian Wilson: stacked harmonies, deft chordal shifts. In Butterflies From Monaco, that Wilson influence comes laced with sturdier fragments of rock and funk *à la* Prince. Chang also takes in Tropicália (A Day Or Two) and Afro-pop (Moving Parts), and in the soft-scoop psych of Candy Cane Rainbow, such tantalising lyrical conundrums as: "Slowly inducing cerebral hypoxia/Joy in the arms of the eyes of another."

*Martin Aston*

## Little Scream

★★★★

Speed Queen

MERGE. CD/DL/LP

**Quietly angry third from Montreal's well-connected Laurel Sprengelmeyer.**

Vocalist on The National's *High Violet* and Arcade Fire member Richard Reed Parry's *Quiet River Of Dust* project, as Little Scream, multi-instrumentalist Lauren Sprengelmeyer is awash with intriguing contradictions. She's musically accomplished, so Disco Ball has a breezy cascading chorus; Still Life rattles like Sheila E and Forces Of Spring has a *Tango In The Night*-era, Fleetwood Mac sheen. Underneath it all, though, there's an erudite fury, whether fighting the class war on Privileged Child ("Poverty's a feeling money can't buy"), weighing in on US immigration on Dear Leader ("Racists who would kill for their law and order/Can go ahead and build their walls on every single border") and against gormless hedonism on No More Saturday Night. Rather than falling between two stools, Sprengelmeyer's songcraft and politics complement each other. This is good, thoughtful work.

*John Aizlewood*

## SebastiAn

★★★★

Thirst

ED BANGER. CD/DL/LP

**Serbian-French dance producer ups the ante with his new album**

Daft Punk remixer SebastiAn carved out an electro pop niche in 2011 with his debut album *Total*. In the last eight years he has developed his plug-ins and worked with everyone from Frank Ocean to Charlotte Gainsbourg, and now has a deeper turbine techno sound. Most of the tracks have featured artists – but he doesn't just go for the obvious. As well as Sparks, Gainsbourg (singing the spidery pop track Pleasant), and celestial R&B artist Mayer Hawthorne, there are new talents like Iranian-Dutch enchantress Sevdaliza and London rock crooner Bakar. SebastiAn creates a crackling undertow while their voices glide high in the mix. It's a good album, but the standout track is just him alone on Beograd, a swirling big-room French house track, where he is beautifully lost in the beats.

*Lucy O'Brien*

## William Doyle

★★★★

Your Wilderness Revisited

THE ORCHARD. CD/DL/LP

**Affirmation that the East India Youth man no longer needs a different identity.**

The wilderness is British suburbia as lived in by William Doyle from age 13. After the death of his father, he was uprooted and transplanted to Millersdale, a Hampshire development referred to in the opening track. *Your Wilderness Revisited* investigates how the psychogeography and psychology of his past frames everything he has done so far. As East India Youth, Doyle hadn't given away much about himself, but the follow-up to the low-key, ambient-leaning *The Dream Derealised* – also released under his own name – is his most complete artistic statement to date. Doyle's singing is up-front and confident. Although his predilection for itchy electronica remains, the pop-inclined *Your Wilderness Revisited* evokes parallels with Radiohead's *In Rainbows*, Field Music and the Brian Eno of *Before And After Science*. Indeed, Eno makes a guest appearance on the album, reciting snatches from local authority housing guidelines: "Distinctive and positive identity, a sense of place…"

*Kieron Tyler*

## FKA Twigs

★★★

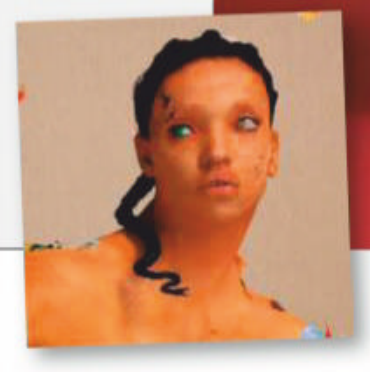
Magdalene

YOUNG TURKS. CD/DL/LP

**Long-awaited follow-up to Twigs's Mercury-nominated debut.**

AFTER THE minimal trip-hop of 2014's *LP1*, Twigs is delving into religious tropes of female sexuality and longing with the myth of Mary Magdalene. First track Thousand Eyes is extraordinary – medieval chant cut by monstrous effects, like a surreal mix of Roman Polanski and Hildegard of Bingen. Home With You, too, sweetly plays with voice, echo and silence, while her most 'normal' track, the erotic trap of Holy Terrain, featuring Future, is passionately trippy. Despite an awesome list of collaborators – from dons Noah Goldstein and Nicolas Jaar to Skrillex and Jack Antonoff – there is a sense of strain. Twigs plants words with tenacious deliberation and care, but sometimes the result is overstudied, a gentle industrial emo. It'll be interesting to see what happens if she relaxes and just lets a song fly; tune, groove 'n' all.

*Lucy O'Brien*



**Entering holy terrain: FKA Twigs gets trippy.**

Matthew Stone

# Sugar and spice

Drunk on Rihanna and Ariana, indie trio power-up their synths and go pop. By **Stevie Chick**.

## Girl Ray

★★★

Girl

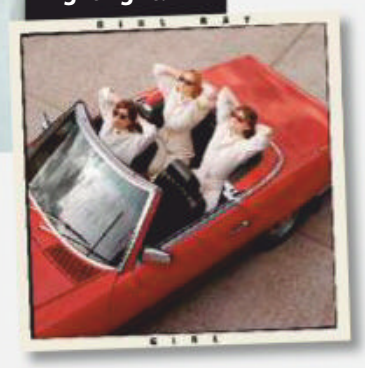
MOSHI MOSHI. **CD/DL/LP**

NORTH LONDON trio Girl Ray's 2017 debut, *Earl Grey*, was a slight, endearingly humble thing, its rat-a-tat drums, pawn-shop electric piano and minimal strum sewn together with Margo Guryan-esque harmonies. Amid all the indie-pop modesty and '70s soft rock moves, however, a sprawling title track betrayed grander ambitions, its 13 minutes segueing between folk rock reveries, Tropicálian excursions, even barbershop ragas. Subtitled "Stuck In A Groove", it was anything but, hinting at a group in transition, still to reach their final form.

Two years on, and Girl Ray are – cosmetically, at least – a very different proposition. Inspired by tour bus expeditions and aftershow discos playlisted by the queens of pneumatic modern pop – Ariana and Rihanna – head Girl Poppy Hankin put down her guitar and penned her latest tunes on synthesizer, while the group hired producer/mixer Ash Workman (whose credits include indie electronicists Metronomy and the first Christine And The Queens album) to record their second album.

But while *Girl* scarcely resembles their winsome indie of yore, neither is it an album to give Ms Grande sleepless nights. Girl Ray have embraced modern technology, but their trip back to the future has stalled somewhere in the first half of the 1980s. When they play electronic soul, it sounds less like 21st century chartbusters and more like Scritti Politti, The Style Council or Cruel Summer-era Bananarama, with an emphasis on melody, an absence of low-end, and a pleasing surfeit of Casio handclaps on the rhythm tracks.

Hankin's featherlight touch and her songs' nostalgic, dreamy tones make the opening title track – a tale of tentative flirtation, Hankin telling her romantic quarry, "We could have fun, play games/Or you could just hold my hand," and sighing, "won't you be my girl?" – a delirious treat.



**Neon reveries: Girl Ray, keeping it light.**

The group bare fangs on Keep It Tight, however, an anthem to their friendship that takes aim at some fool boy who "dipped me like a casual fondue" and is "fucking with my trio/When we rehearse he's on the phone", while the longing conjured by the sleek electro-pop of Just Down The Hall feels very real, and their dolorous vamp on The Beatles' Because is a swoonsome thing.

*Girl*'s sherbety tuneage and choreographed vocal lines undeniably scratch the pop itch, with Hankin's icy, affectless vocals – imagine Phoebe Waller-Bridge channelling Nico – lending a deliciously deadpan offset, especially when incongruously delivering couplets like "Drinking wine/Feeling fine".

But for all the summery pop fizz contained within, it's the emotional sophistication and melodic chiaroscuro of closing piano-ballad Like The Stars that hits hardest, suggesting Girl Ray's metamorphosis is still ongoing, and that their true final form may resemble something darker and more substantial than *Girl*'s neon reveries, diverting though they are.

## Golden Shoulders

★★★★

Could This Be The End

GOLDEN SHOULDERS. **CD/DL**

**Adam Kline & co's first LP in a decade is worth the wait.**

A one-man band with many, many contributors (including Josh Klinghoffer, Joanna Newsom and Kelley Stoltz this time out), Beatles obsessive Kline surfaces for air – as he does every three years, though it's been 10 since he produced a full LP – with another rumination on what *The White Album* might have sounded like had the Fab Four spent more time on lyrics in 1968. As befits the times, the more beaten-down songs go deepest, and there is less to laugh at in the words: I Think I'm At Peace With That Now, Respectfully, I'd Prefer You Stayed and You Took Your Time And Mine suggest a man wondering where the bright future we thought was ours has gone. But Habit Of Mine and Setting Sun display a backbone, a readiness for the fight. Good to have them back.

*David Hutcheon*

Laura McCluskey

## Pumarosa

★★★

Devastation

CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL. **CD/DL/LP**

**London quintet's second LP, built on shaken foundations.**

The backdrop to Pumarosa's follow-up to 2017's *The Witch* is a traumatic one: singer Isabel Muñoz-Newsome was diagnosed with cervical cancer just as their debut took flight, a flurry of publicity, praise and performance coinciding with the spectre of surgery and a radical rethink of her relationship with her body. It's not fanciful, then, to feel the floor sometimes shaking under *Devastation*, seismic electronic static buckling the boards, Muñoz-Newsome's stretched-spring vocals ensuring Apart or Factory hold their shape. It's by no means purely embattled, though: Björk can be detected in the humid sensuality of I Am Lost, while the title track has a looping, catch-me-if-you-can Cocteau Twins defiance. Standing tall amid crumbling masonry, *Devastation* traces intriguing patterns in the settling dust.

*Victoria Segal*

## Sunn O)))

★★★

Pyroclasts

SOUTHERN LORD. **CD/DL/LP**

**Four warm-up/wind-down jams from last year's *Life Metal* sessions.**

While cutting their twelfth LP with Steve Albini in July 2018, cowl-sporting duo Stephen O'Malley and Greg Anderson would start and/or finish each day's recording with a free-form improv piece, with highlights presented here. Cue the artful theorising of Southern Lord: "*Pyroclasts* is a sister, or perhaps a shadow album, or perhaps the now apparent miasma or aether". Sceptics may merely hear Neil Young & Crazy Horse dozing off while finishing Cinnamon Girl, times four. In allowing their twin-bass feedback to spiral on largely free of embellishment or structural riffing, it's them reconnecting with 1998's inaugural *The GrimmRobe Demos*, beloved of drone purists, but also stripping themselves of the awe-inspiring aural theatre that has distinguished their later collaborative records: *Life Metal*, for instance, boasted Anthony Pateras's exquisite pipe organ, and a 'doom-cello' solo from múm's Hildur Guònadóttir. By comparison, this sounds raw and mighty, but somewhat same-old.

*Andrew Perry*

## Young Guv

★★★

GUV I & GUV II

RUN FOR COVER. **CD/DL/LP**

**Two new albums from Fucked Up guitarist Ben Cook's playful alter-ego.**

With its terrier-like grip on classic powerpop tropes *à la* Big Star, Teenage Fanclub and Guided By Voices, *GUV 1* is so knowing it recalls that old headline in The Onion: "37 Record-Store Clerks Feared Dead In Yo La Tengo Concert Disaster". You wouldn't question it, though, if it turned out Didn't Even Cry actually *was* a newly discovered Chris Bell song, and the swooning High On My Mind (fitting title for a record recorded on LSD in a Brooklyn apartment) is truly gorgeous. *GUV II* peaks slightly lower, its standout tracks Can't Say Goodbye and Forgot To Feel closer in style to Cook's 2015 yacht-rock influenced *Ripe 4 Luv*, and Caught Lookin' pleasingly cognisant of The Hues Corporation's '70s disco smash Rock The Boat. There are certainly treasures here if you sift through Guv's prolific unburdening.

*James McNair*

## Anna Meredith

★★★

Fibs

MOSHI MOSHI. **CD/DL/LP**

**Real deal: Scottish composer's second own-brand album flies true.**

There's a glorious restlessness to Anna Meredith's music, not just in her choice of projects – her previous two releases have been *Anno*, a rewiring of Vivaldi's Four Seasons, and the soundtrack to Bo Burnham's coming of age drama Eighth Grade – but also in the way it builds and surges, tripping a whole range of emotional levers and switches. *Fibs*, the Proms-closing composer's follow-up to 2016's playful, internally-sprung *Varmints*, continues her dynamic adventuring. It still inhabits the manic pixel dreamworld of a sentient arcade game – the hectic blip of Paramour and Bump, for example, bearing traces of her blockbuster Nautilus – but she often dips and shifts the mood, with Killjoy's upcycled prog harmonies or the trailing '90s electro-pop of Ribbons.

Meredith's precision helps control the fun, but this is another buoyant invention from her musical lab.

*Victoria Segal*

## DJ Shadow

★★★

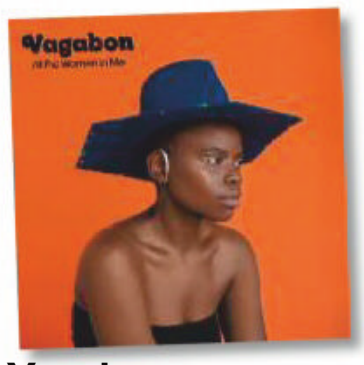
Our Pathetic Age

MASS APPEAL. **LP/CD/DL**

**Plunderphonics prodigy tackles the disconnection of the social media era.**

While DJ Shadow has struggled to find a firm footing in the 23 years since *Endtroducing*'s intricate quilt of samples and breakbeats ripped up rap's rulebook, he's resisted the temptation to merely repeat himself. Survivors of subsequent so-so dalliances will find plenty to admire on this bloated double set – its instrumental first disc a foreboding sea of sputtering synths, dislocated drums and disorienting ideas. Yet rare moments of beauty peak through, including a perfect jack of Library of Congress a cappella Big-Legged Rosie. A similar wilful primitivism pervades disc two, as rap vets including De La Soul, Nas and Pharoahe Monch get caustic about clickbait. If the cumulative effect is a little overbearing, it ends joyously with Sam Herring's impassioned baritone billowing above an organic soul groove.

*Andy Cowan*




## Vagabon

★★★★

Vagabon

NONESUCH. **CD/DL/LP**

**Cameroon-born, NYC-based Lætitia Tamko reinvented, from indie to electronica.**

Vagabon's album debut, *Infinite Worlds* – of a piece with Lucy Dacus and Courtney Barnett's singer-songwriter emo – made its mark in the US, but frazzled by touring and writer's block, she took refuge in her laptop. Having written Flood Hands "for a well-known pop duo" then deciding to keep the song for herself, she eventually ended up with a whole album of lush, digitised folk-pop and ballads. The reboot allows Vagabon's richer and more vulnerable vocals freer rein, and suits these aching travelogues of love, separation and absence (that's prolonged touring for you). Occasionally, she looks outward; on Every Woman, a starker, acoustic spiritual, she warns, "All the women in me are fired up/They get ready to kill with their luck." The Afro-pop timbres peeking through also reveal more about who Vagabon is, and what she is capable of.

*Martin Aston*

Vitória Proença, Corinne Schiavone

**Lucas Santtana: emotional vocals.**

## Lucas Santtana

★★★

O Céu É Velho Há Muito Tempo

NO FORMAT! **CD/DL/LP**

**Singer-songwriter's pared-back seventh LP spotlights socio-political abuses.**

From Caetano Veloso to João Gilberto, Brazilian music has thrived on just six strings and a golden voice. Having gained notoriety for splicing pop with Tropicália, bossa nova and electronica since 2000's debut *Eletro Ben Dodô*, Gilberto Gil's onetime flautist has gone back to basics, in whispered revolt against Jair Bolsonaro's right-wing government. Santtana abets his mix of muted strum, tender pluck and finger taps with nakedly emotional vocals, whether doling out uneasy monologues (Portal De Ativação), infectious pop (Ninguém Solta A Mão De Ninguém), Brel-ish rebukes of corruption (Um Professor Está Falando Com Você) and vulnerable Jorge Drexler adaptations (Todo Se Transforma), even refashioning Brazil's national anthem along the way. Throughout, his facility for marrying memorable melodies with affecting protest prevents this from ever sounding one-note.

*Andy Cowan*

## Soundwalk Collective With Patti Smith

★★★

Mummer Love

BELLA UNION. **CD/DL/LP**

**Art-fuelled, found-sound gatherers' second 2019 LP.**

Earlier this year Soundwalk Collective based an album on Antonin Artaud's Mexican travels. Now they turn their attention to Arthur Rimbaud's little-known Ethiopian period. While a coffee dealer in the walled city of Harar in the 1880s, Rimbaud discovered Sufism, the mystical side of Islam. As is their way, Soundwalk Collective took a field trip and recorded local sounds which they set to long-term Rimbaud fan Patti Smith's readings of his poetry (and her tribute to him on the title track), with assistance from Philip Glass. It's a challenging listen, but more exhilarating than pretentious. Smith brings the authority she brought to her William Blake readings and Glass's piano is dream-like on La Maison de Rimbaud. But the real joy is in Eternity, where Smith's vocals, some very western electro-throb and joyful African chanting battle for supremacy. Everyone emerges victorious.

*John Aizlewood*

# SOUNDTRACKS

BY ANDREW MALE

## Bobby Krlic

★★★★★

Midsommar

MILAN. **CD/DL/LP**

**The man behind The Haxan Cloak creates the encroaching sound of a deep enveloping terror.**

MUCH HAS been written about Ari Aster's Scandi-set folk horror since its release in the summer, so it's surprising that little of that analysis has been directed explicitly towards Bobby Krlic's impressive score. The Wakefield-born musician has been releasing music as The Haxan Cloak since 2009, and working alongside Atticus Ross on soundtracks since 2015's Blackhat, but this is deserving of closer inspection. Both soundtrack *and* score, Krlic's music occupies the entire body of the film, from the atonal, ritualistic music the characters create inside the narrative, to the atmospheric dread-tones that occupy the bright edges of the frame. Employing traditional Nordic instruments such as hurdy-gurdy, key harp and hardanger fiddle alongside his usual bank of electronics, Krlic has created a world in which the music of ancient tradition works like a sonic virus that simultaneously soothes and eats away at your very soul.

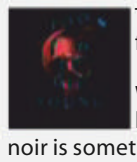
## ALSO RELEASED

### Cliff Martinez

★★★

Too Old To Die Young

MILAN. **CD/DL/LP**



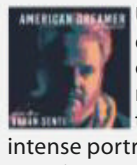
The feeling you get from watching all 13 hours of Nicolas Winding Refn's hallucinatory neon noir is something akin to jet-lag, euphoria and fear, all awash in your head. Cliff Martinez's score, while undeniably brilliant, occupies that same space: stealth gamelan jitters supplementing the sci-fi metallic unease of a silver-paper migraine behind the eyes.

### Bryan Senti

★★★★

American Dreamer

PHANTOM LIMB. **DL**



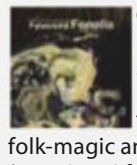

Unease is the dominant mood of this creeping minimalist score to Derrick Borte's intense portrait of middle-American economic collapse. Subtly terrifying, Senti's spare electronic world moves almost imperceptibly from calming to unsettling, a world where ambient no longer means calming, but simply the barely-there presence in your immediate surroundings.

### Fenella

★★★★

Fehérlófia

FIRE. **LP**



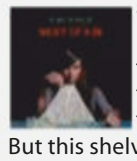
Composed as a reimagined soundtrack to Marcell Jankovics' tripped-out 1981 folk-magic animation, Fehérlófia (AKA Son Of The White Mare), Jane Weaver's period-specific groove trio Fenella are deep into Roland sequencer effects, as if reimagining some haunted Nick Rhodes solo album, Weaver's ghost-angel voice sailing over arpeggios and drones reminiscent of The Chauffeur and Save A Prayer.

### Klaus Schulze

★★★★

Next Of Kin

ROUNDTABLE. **DL/LP**



"Long thought lost… remastered from original master tapes" – you know the spiel by now. But this shelved score to the 1982 Australian New Wave horror is a real find, the German minor-chord synth-sachem Schulze chucking everything from Oldfield bells and Giallo swirl to mesmeric Berlin-School oscillations. *AM*

# FILTER ALBUMS EXTRA

## Black Marble

★★★★

Bigger Than Life

SACRED BONES. **CD/DL/LP**

A New Yorker moved to LA, Chris Stewart's third BM album parlays those new horizons into a full-contrast, happy-sad electronic pop record. With swaying synths, popping drums, synth melodies and wistful lyrics, it's Depeche Mode for the juicing era. *JB*

## Common Holly

★★★★

When I Say To You Black Lightning

DALLIANCE RECORDINGS. **CD/DL/LP**

Montreal's Brigitte Naggar probes relationship politics in a voice that's confiding, emotive, yet detached enough to be observational. Her second LP is all restrained, subtly shifting post-grunge dynamics. Highly engaging. *JB*

## Rachael Dadd

★★★★

Flux

MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES. **CD/DL/LP**

A This Is The Kit associate pushing similar emotional buttons with her precise vocal melodies, there's a hint of Wicker Man weird in Dadd's elemental acoustic daydreams. Palaeontologist ponders: "Was their love in the cretaceous?" Good question. *JB*

## Fink

★★★

Bloom Innocent

R'COUP'D. **CD/DL/LP**

Fin Greenall called on Flood to co-produce and realise the former DJ's more epic instincts across a set of songs that feel hushed and spare but belie complex, acoustic dub-style arrangements. His earnest emotional intensity will speak to Bon Iver fans. *CP*

## Great Grandpa

★★★

Four Arrows

BIG SCARY MONSTERS. **CD/DL/LP**

Outgrowing the ProTooled grunge of their debut, the Seattle five-piece take a folk rock detour, sounding fulsome, on English Garden. Alex Menne's Dolores O'Riordan-ish yodel still dominates and can overwhelm the songs, but Big Thief fans should take note. *CP*

## Richie Hawtin

★★★

Close Combined

PLUS 8 RECORDINGS. **DL**

Hour-plus AV mix of Hawtin's Close tour begins with him explaining the source of Detroit techno in a robot voice before shaking his rump between digital decks, drum machines, modular synths and analogue mixer. The future is here. And on YouTube. *JB*

## Kid Acne

★★★★

Have A Word

LEX. **CD/DL/LP**

"I'm Kendrick Lamar eating Kendal Mint Cake," brags Acne, just one of a barrage of bon mots over Calor-cooking beats from Chicago's Spectacular Diagnostics. Best of all is Ancient Sea Kings, a spot-on duet with MIA abstractionists New Kingdom. *AC*

## London Afrobeat Collective

★★★★

Humans

LONDON AFROBEAT PRODS. **CD/DL/LP**

The 18-footed groove machine go for it on their gloriously dissenting second. *Humans* is an ace space where hard funk and political fervour collide with the formidable vocal power of Juanita Euka. *AC*

## Los Piranas

★★★

Historia Natural

GILTTERBEAT. **CD/DL/LP**

Colombian guitar-bass-drums trio continue their sci-fi, instrumental rock'n'roll experiments on traditional cumbia. Llanero Soledeño sets the pace to a Duane Eddy stroll, a Smoke On The Water riff played with rhythmic intensity. It only gets wilder. *JB*

## Piney Gir

★★★

You Are Here

STRS. **CD/DL/LP**

Featuring Sweet Baboo on saxophone, Peanut Butter Malt Shop Heartthrob, first single from London-based Kansan's latest, is a sweet Lesley Gore-ish confection. Elsewhere, anarchic spirit dominates, girlish but knowing on multi-textured guitar pop. *CP*

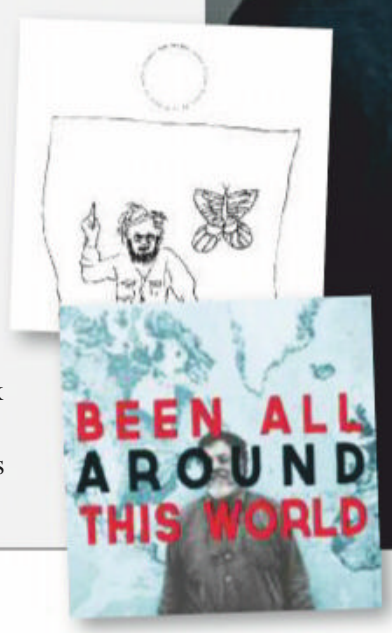
## EXTENDED PLAY

# Sam Amidon's Fatal Flower Garden

Totemic crate-digger Harry Smith's belief in deep cultural connections is borne out this month in two separate musicologically-inspired projects. UK-based Sam Amidon pays tribute to Smith's admirable obsession with collecting 78s from the 1920s and '30s, on a four-track EP of covers drawn from Smith's *Anthology Of American Folk Music*, entitled Fatal Flower Garden. Inspired by Smith's passion for esoteric magic, Amidon channels the fervour and dread on one highlight, Train On The Island, with bluegrass fiddle and banjo, vocal roaring and whistling.

Sixty years ago, venerable musicologist Alan Lomax, assisted by Shirley Collins, travelled through Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Georgia and North Carolina, making 70 hours' of field recordings of traditional music from lone fiddlers to Pentecostal congregations, discovering Mississippi Fred McDowell and Bessie Jones along the way. Been All Around This World, the podcast focused on the Alan Lomax Archive, dedicates its second series, Southern Journey, to the recordings made on this trip.

**Sam Amidon: ready to roar in tribute to Harry Smith.**



## Saariselka

★★★

The Ground Our Sky

TEMPORARY RESIDENCE. **CD/DL/LP**

Oakland pedal steel maestro Chuck Johnson got close to the big sky meditations and ethereal twang of Eno's *Apollo* on 2017's *Balsams*. Here, with Date Palms' Marielle Jakobsons on keys and some (unnecessary) vocals, he gets closer; a frontier bliss-out. *JM*

## These New South Whales

★★★★

I Just Do What God Tells Me To Do

THESENEWSOUTHWHALES.COM. **DL/LP**

TNSW also make a TV comedy about being pathetic punks. Very meta, except the *actual* band are great: tight, no-frills, plaintive vocals, caustic guitar and thumping rhythms. *JB*

# A PERMANENT SHADOW

Debut album
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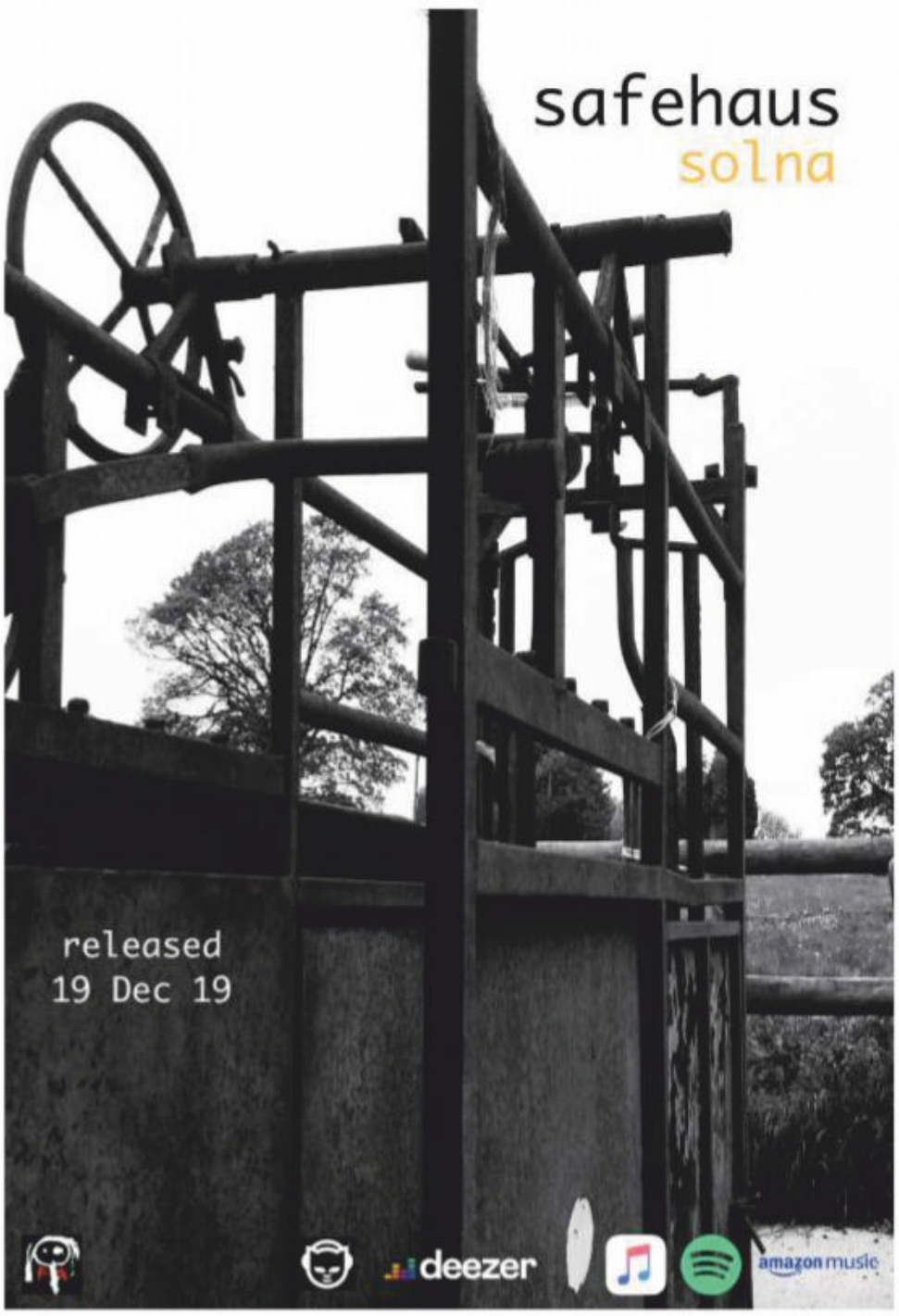


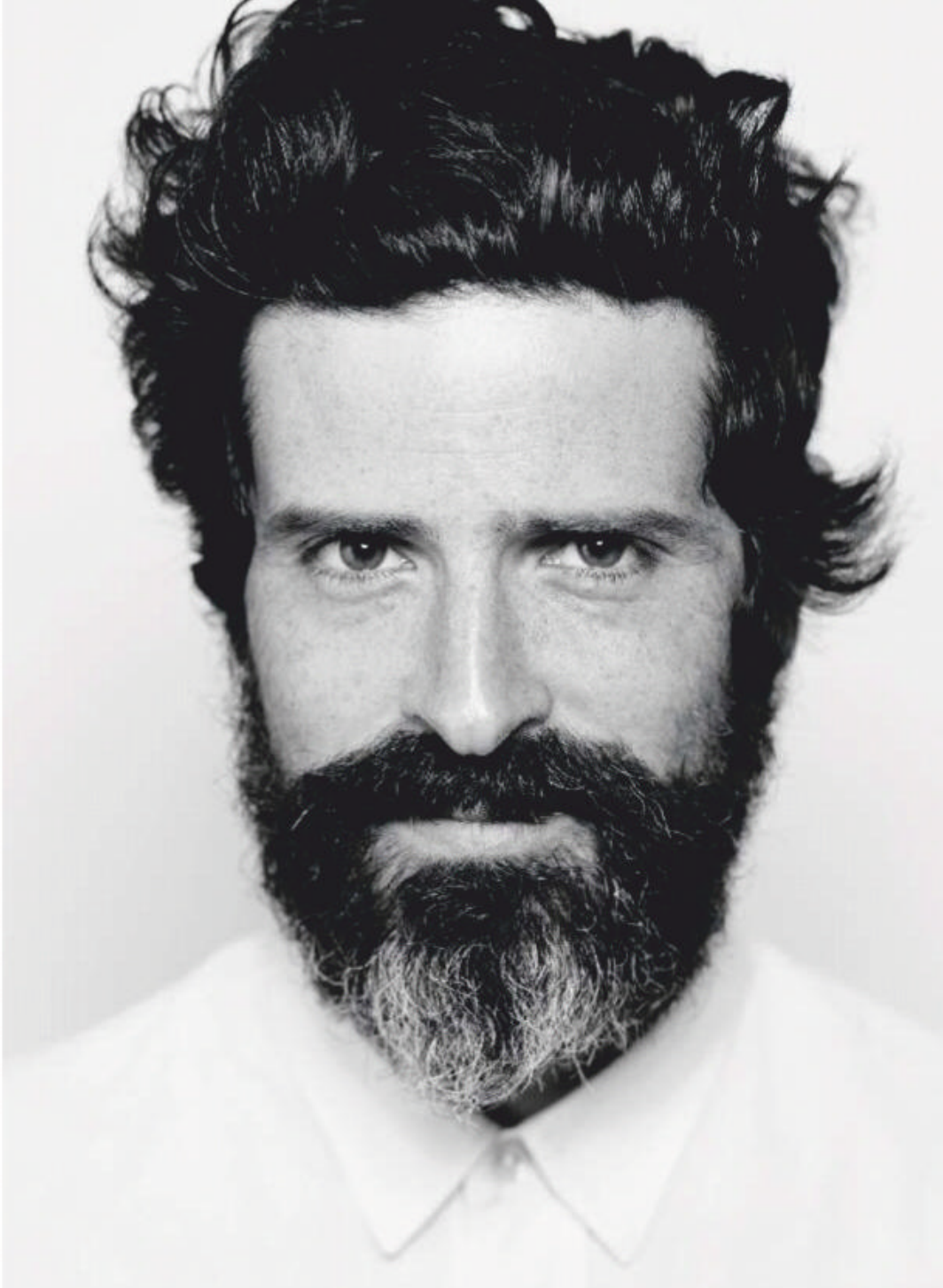

# *Devendra Banhart*
# *Ma*

'Groovy and moving, in all the right directions.'
***Mojo*** ★★★★

'Banhart's singular world remains as intoxicating as ever.' *Q* ★★★★

'His most sublime work to date. An artist at the top of their game.' ***Record Collector*** ★★★★

'Banhart's most focussed work to date.'
***Uncut*** ★★★★

The acclaimed new album out now.

Live in concert on February 4 at Shepherd's Bush Empire, London.

nonesuch

devendrabanhart.com

# MOJO Recommended Retailers

Here's the exclusive monthly guide to the country's most mouthwatering independent record emporia. Chosen for their knowledge of both current releases and specialist areas, they're guaranteed to provide the personal touch you won't find elsewhere. And they stock MOJO too. All where you see this sign.

## The Vinyl Whistle

www.vinylwhistle.co.uk
Email: thevinylwhistleshop@gmail.com
Twitter: @whistle_shop
Instagram: vinylwhistle
**Tel: 0113 426 0588**

39 Otley Road, Headingley, Leeds, LS6 3AB

**Located in the heart of Headingley, approx. 10 minutes drive from Leeds city centre, The Vinyl Whistle opened its doors to music and vinyl lovers for the first time in July 2019. The store buys and sells a wide variety of new, used and collectable vinyl, encompassing all genres and prides itself on its especially impressive indie/Manchester scene collection. Offering fresh, award-winning coffee and vegan, home-made cakes in a relaxed setting, The Vinyl Whistle is a must-visit destination when searching for vinyl in Leeds.**

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Edinburgh
EH3 9AT
**0131 228 3943**

**Europa Music**
10 Friars Street,
Stirling FK8 1HA
**01786 448623**

**Mo Fidelity**
126 Murray Street
Montrose,
DD10 9JG
**07870 491240**

### NORTH WEST

**81 Renshaw Street**
Liverpool L1 2SJ
**01517071850**

**Action**
47 Church St, Preston
PR1 3DH
**01772 884 772 / www.action-records.co.uk**

**Five Rise Records**
30c Park Road
Bingley, West Yorks
BD16 4QF
**01274 512867**

**Grind and Groove Records**
58 Cavendish Street,
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BD21 3RL
**07483 156867**

**Piccadilly Records**
53 Oldham St,
Manchester M1 1JR
**0161 839 8008**

**Vinyl Cafe**
44 Abbey St, Carlisle
CA3 8TX
**01228 522845**

**X Records**
44 Bridge St,
Bolton BL1 2EG
**01204 384579**

**TNT Records Ltd**
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Barrow in Furness
Cumbria
LA14 1RD
**07428171256**

### NORTH EAST

**Blackslab**
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**07590590735**

**Crash Records**
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**0113 2436743**

**Earworm Records**
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**J.G.Windows**
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Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 5BP
**0191 232 1356**

**Muse Music**
40 Market St, Hebden Bridge
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**01422 843496**

**Record Collector**
232 Fullwood Road,
Sheffield,
S10 3BA
**0114 266 8493**

**Reflex**
23 Nun St,
Newcastle
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**0191 260 3246**
**www.reflexcd.co.uk**

**Roots2Music**
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Newcastle NE1 1SG
**0191 230 2500 / www.roots2music.com**

**Sound Records**
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**Vinyl Tap**
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**01484 517720 / www.vinyltap.co.uk**

**The Vinyl Whistle**
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Leeds, LS6 3AB
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**Strange Victory Records**
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**02895 080300**

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**01970 624581**

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**Discovery Music**
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EX32 8ND
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**Diverse Music**
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Newport, NP20 1JU
**01633 259 661 / www.diversevinyl.com**

**Haystacks Music**
Blackfold, Hay on Wye
HR3 5EQ
**075272 98199**

**Spillers**
31 Morgan Arcade,
Cardiff CF10 1AF
**02920224905**

**Tangled Parrot Carmarthen**
Upper Floor, 32 King St,
Carmarthen SA31 1BS

**Terminal Records**
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Old Bridge, Haverfordwest
SA61 2AN
**07796987534**

### MIDLANDS

**Eclipse Records**
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Walsall WS1 1RE
**01922 322142**

**Fish Records**
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Crown Street,
Stone ST15 8UY
**01785 818847**

**Head Records**
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**01926 883421**

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**01743 247777 / www.leftfordeadshop.co.uk**

**Music In The Green**
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Bakewell DE45 1EW
**07929 282 950**

**Music Mania**
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Hanley, Stoke On Trent
ST1 1DL
**01782 206000**
**www.musicmaniauk.com**

**Polar Bear**
10 York Rd,
Birmingham B14 7RZ
**0121 441 5202**

**ST Records**
165 Wolverhampton St,
Dudley, West Midlands
DY1 3HA
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### EAST MIDLANDS

**Off The Beaten Tracks**
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Louth LN11 9HP
**01507 607677 / www.offthebeatentracks.org**

**Rough Trade**
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Nottingham
NG1 3AL
**0115869 4012**

**Tallbird Records**
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Chesterfield
S40 1JN
**01246 234548**

**Vinyl Lounge**
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NG18 1SS
**01623 427291**

### WEST

**Badlands**
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**01242 227 725**

**Forest Vinyl**
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**07751 404393.**

**The Music Store**
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**01600 716362**

**Rapture**
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Witney
OX28 6AP
**01993 700567**

**Tangled Parrot Hay-On-Wye**
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**Truck Store**
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### EAST

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**Holt Vinyl Vault**
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**Intense Records**
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**01205 369419**

**Relevant**
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Cambridge
CB1 3NF
**01223 244 684**

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**01245 350820**

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N8 8LA
**0208 341 9007**

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**0208 858 1964 / www.casbahrecords.co.uk**

### Eel Pie Records
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**07817756315**

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E2 7DG
**0207 735 49356**

### Flashback Records
50 Essex Rd,
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N1 8LR

### Flashback Records
144 Crouch Hill,
Crouch End
N8 9DX

### Level Crossing Records
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East Sheen
SW14 8AB
**07759 080059**

### Rough Trade
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**020 7229 8541 / www.roughtrade.com**

### Rough Trade East
'Dray Walk' Old Truman Brewery,
91 Brick Lane
E1 6QL
**0207 392 7788 / www.roughtrade.com**

### Sister Ray
34-35 Berwick St,
W1V 3RF
**0207 7343297 / www.sisterray.co.uk**

### Soul Brother
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SW15 2HL
**020 8875 1018 / www.soulbrother.com**

### Soul Propieter
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**07532 492196**

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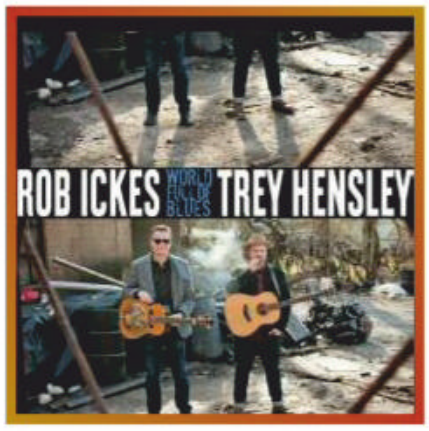
# proper PRESENTS

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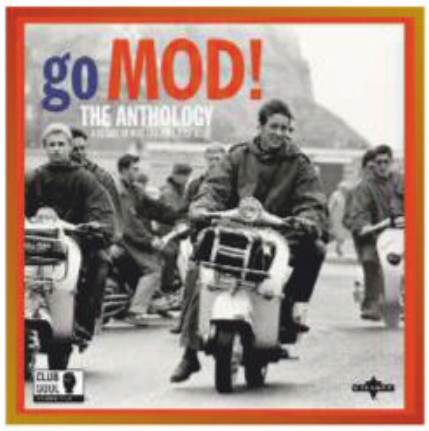


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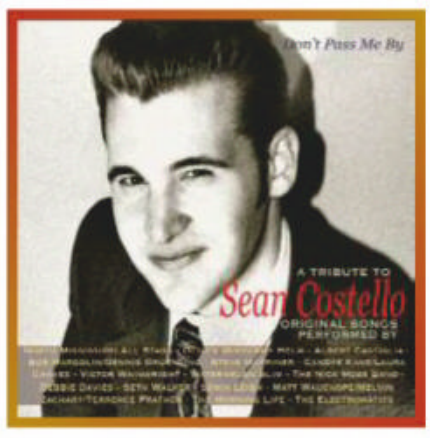


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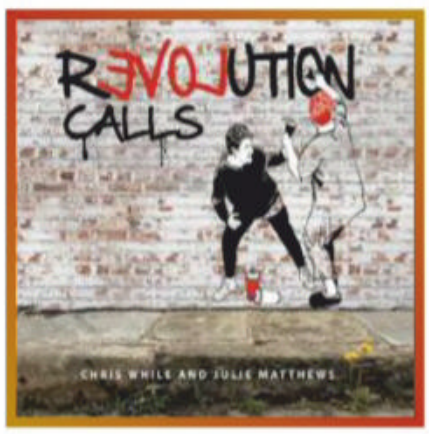



**CHRIS WHILE & JULIE MATTHEWS**
**REVOLUTION CALLS**
CD
Fat Cat Records

**VARIOUS ARTISTS SUNSHINE OF YOUR LOVE - A CONCERT FOR JACK BRUCE**
2 CD / DVD BOX SET
Mig Music

# Here's Johnny!

Latest instalment of the *Official Bootleg Series* includes Dylan's legendary recording sessions with the Man In Black. By **Sylvie Simmons.**

## Bob Dylan (Featuring Johnny Cash)

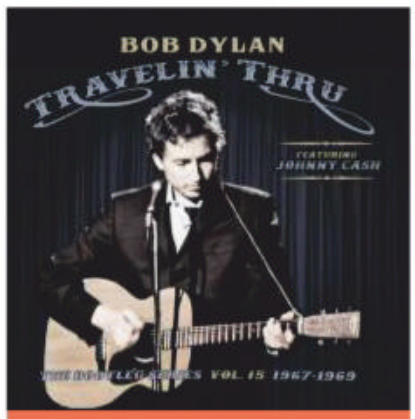
★★★★★

Travelin' Thru: Vol 15 1967-1969

COLUMBIA SONY/LEGACY. **CD/DL/LP**

MAYBE IT'S the modest size, as compared to the recent hefty, 14-CD *Rolling Thunder Revue* box, that makes this 3-CD set feel like a warm, light breeze. Or maybe it's the vibe – relaxed and casual but focused; a million miles from mid-'70s Dylan leading a ragtag circus on a sprawling North America tour. In *Travelin' Thru*, we have Dylan in Nashville, in the late '60s, recording *John Wesley Harding*, *Nashville Skyline* and *Self Portrait*, working with a stellar band of Nashville cats and with Bob Johnston, the famed, maverick producer who first brought Dylan to Music City. Johnston it was who also put Dylan and Cash in the studio together, and kept the tapes rolling for more than two hours as they sang and played together on traditional songs, originals and covers.

The Dylan-Cash sessions, despite all of Johnston's many attempts to get Columbia Records to release them, stayed on the shelves. Over the years a number of songs leaked onto unofficial bootlegs. On this official bootleg, where they make up two-thirds of the collection, it's impossible not to think of them as the big, beating heart of the set, and as an insight into the DNA of Dylan.




**"At a time when rock was 'us' and country was 'them', here were two men having a musical conversation on shared roots."**

Before it gets to the main item on the menu, CD1 gallops through the starters – seven alternative versions of songs from *John Wesley Harding* and seven from *Nashville Skyline*, plus one previously-unreleased track. For Dylan fans now accustomed to a multiplicity of different takes, this might seem like slim pickings. The linernotes (by Dylanologists Ben Rollins and Colin Escott, and Rosanne Cash), blame the dearth of outtakes on the number of master tapes that went missing, some of them apparently thrown out after CBS Nashville failed to pay storage fees. And, they say, it also had to do with the different approach Dylan took to making these albums. Whereas in the past he'd stay up all night with the band and experiment on songs, he had such a strong idea of what he wanted that one take didn't differ too much from the next.

Some of the biggest exceptions are on *John Wesley Harding* – I Am A Lonesome Hobo and I Pity The Poor Immigrant, which has an entirely different melody. On *Nashville Skyline*, there's a whole new song, Western Road – a fine slow blues with a piano solo and a light-hearted laugh at the end, but as to the rest, the differences are far from monumental. For the most part, as you listen to them, you just find yourself thinking they made the right choices with the tracks that made the final album. My only argument would be with *Nashville Skyline*'s most significant song, the Dylan-Cash duet Girl From The North Country. As good as the version on the finished album is, the one on CD3, sung live on The Johnny Cash Show, is hands-down perfect.

Rosanne Cash, in her notes, recalls watching that TV show 50 years ago as a 13-year-old. "Their collaboration changed not only my life," she writes, "but the lives of most people of my generation, and the cultural landscape of the entire country." The importance of that TV show can't be overestimated. It was up there with The Beatles on The Ed Sullivan Show. Once again, all of America, it seemed, watched – flag-waving rednecks and flag-burning hippies staring at the screen and seeing country's biggest icon and the king of the counterculture singing and playing together. It was beautiful. And it was deadly serious. Neither was making fun of the other; there were no political pot-shots – and this was in the year Richard Nixon was voted president, and the year after the murders of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. It was a time when rock was "us" and country was "them", but here they were, two men from two different sets of circumstances – a Baptist from the South, a Jew from the Midwest nine years his junior – having a musical conversation based on their shared roots, which were folk, gospel and blues, the American song. In the current climate, it feels like a whole different America.

It's fascinating, listening to the Dylan-Cash collaborations as a whole, how Dylan seems to know, or can at least intuit, the words to all the old songs. But as Dylan once told the New York Times, "Those old songs are my lexicon and my prayer book. All my beliefs come out of those old songs." He seems just as well-versed in Johnny Cash songs (and really nails Walk The Line). Dylan was a big Cash fan. "The greatest of the greats," he would call him. "The North Star. You could guide your ship by him." But Cash was a big Dylan fan too. He didn't just cover Dylan's songs, he'd play his albums to everyone until they begged him to stop. Often, though, it seems to be Cash's mountainous voice and guitar style that dominate, while Dylan sounds a little more tentative, shyer maybe. Still he continues to trade verses and invent harmonies on the spot. Among many standout tracks are Don't Think Twice, It's All Right/Understand Your Man – one melody with two different sets of lyrics (the new lyrics to Dylan's song written by Cash). Also, Careless Love, delightfully macho – a phrase I never thought I'd write – but they're clearly having a ball. Musicians drop by to chat or play. Here's Jack Clement. And here's June Carter and Carl Perkins, one of the founding families of country and one of the founding fathers of rock'n'roll. Dylan sings Perkins' song Matchbox, while Perkins plays guitar. He does the same on Jimmie Rodgers Medley No.2, while Dylan, at Cash's prodding, adds the yodel.

When the Dylan-Cash sessions end, CD3 keeps going. There are two Cash cover outtakes from *Self Portrait*, three songs on The Johnny Cash Show, and four from a TV show that Dylan did in 1970 with Earl Scruggs. The closing song on *Travelin' Thru* is the legendary bluegrass banjo player's version of Nashville Skyline Rag. It's a damn good listen, all of it. Generous and revelatory, to borrow Rosanne's words, and at times mind-blowing.

Al Clayton/Sony Music Archives (4)

**BACK STORY: TWO BOB**

● Over half a century ago, maverick record producer Bob Johnston (above left) lured Dylan to Nashville, and Dylan kept coming back. For *John Wesley Harding* (1967) and *Nashville Skyline* (1969) Johnston brought in country session men like Charlie McCoy, Kenneth Buttrey, Pete Drake, Bob Wilson, Norman Blake and Charlie Daniels. He also arranged for Dylan and Johnny Cash to go in the studio together. "They got their guitars, tuned them and we started requesting songs," Johnston told this author in 2002. "Two and a half hours later Dylan said, 'We're finished.' We sat around and heard it and I said, Well, that will never happen again."

**Summit meeting: (below) Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash on the latter's TV show, June 1969; (above left) Dylan and Bob Johnston, Cash makes some adjustments; (above) Bob talks background.**

## Various

★★★★

Ann Arbor Blues Festival 1969 Vols 1 & 2

THIRD MAN. CD/DL/LP

**The Woodstock of the blues in its lo-fi glory.**

A couple weeks before the original Woodstock in 1969 came another festival in Ann Arbor, Michigan that's equally as musically memorable and mythological in the hearts of blues aficionados. For three days, fans saw the established stars of electric blues (B.B. King, Muddy Waters, Lightnin' Hopkins), young 'uns (Otis Rush, Charlie Musselwhite, Sam Lay, James Cotton, Junior Wells), country bluesmen (Mississippi Fred McDowell, Son House, a man named Shirley Griffith), plus founding father T-Bone Walker, blues queen Big Mama Thornton and Zydeco king Clifton Chenier. Highlights include a hair-raising performance of Hard Luck by Howlin' Wolf, with full horn section, and the relentlessly frantic I Feel So Good (I Wanna Boogie) by up-and-coming blues-rocker Magic Sam, who'd tragically die four months later. The low-fidelity recordings add a refreshingly unpretentious, non-commercial realism.

*Michael Simmons*

## Doug Wieselman

★★★★

From Water

FIGUREIGHT. CD/DL/LP

**Intimate woodwind études from NYC reeds veteran.**

A noted Downtown denizen, and sideman for everyone from Laurie Anderson to CocoRosie, sexagenarian Doug Wieselman's own work, particularly with his Kamikaze Ground Crew ensemble, errs toward madcap postmodern jazz, but *From Water*, his debut solo long-player (which had a limited US release back in 2014) proffers a contrastingly fragile soundscape. Inspired by the sound of miscellaneous bodies of H2O, and essayed on vintage clarinets, live looped through a 1960 Fender Vibrolux amplifier, this is evanescent yet transfixing music. Typically, Pacific 2 builds on a delightfully simple, rotating melody, its successive tonal shadings dreamily unforced, while Kepler-22b oscillates seamlessly between cloud-like ambient lines and dissonant pulses, like a woodwind dialogue between Brian Eno and Morton Feldman. Throughout, Wieselman conjures an engagingly sensual auditory world that is, Tennessee Valley's choral diversion notwithstanding, always greater than the sum of its minimal parts.

*David Sheppard*

## Gong

★★★★

Love From The Planet Gong: The Virgin Years 1973-75

UMC. CD

**The classic albums plus killer gigs and rarities, boxed and remastered on 13 CDs.**

1973: with pop getting sillier, and rock ever more po-faced, Gong astral projected in from a commune in the French countryside with funny stuff in their teapots and wisdom in their eyeballs. By day, they sang about witches, pixies and going crazy; after dusk, long nights of heads-down, psychedelic freakout. Led by UFO veteran Daevid Allen, Gong were madcap renegades from the Summer of Love, all space-cake glissando and jumpy, jazzed-up rock. Now, especially when Tim Blake fires up his 'crystal machine', we're as likely to hear the early stirrings of rave culture bliss-out. There are hours of both here, with essential studio albums supplemented by several fine live sets, including rarities from France and Hyde Park, plus outtakes. Occasional diversions into sing-along pop (Oily Way) and Tati-styled punk rock (Ooby-Scooby Doomsday Or The D-Day DJ's Got The D.D.T. Blues) too.

*Mark Paytress*

## Bert Jansch

★★★★

Avocet: 40th Anniversary Edition

EARTH. LP

**Beguiling sound of three folk greats locking antlers; on limited white vinyl.**

In 1979, with Pentangle on hiatus, it was keen twitcher Danny Thompson who proposed that the six Celtic, folk-baroque and Bulgarian music-influenced pieces he and Jansch had part-improvised with Dando Shaft multi-instrumentalist Martin Jackson be named for British birds. With Jansch on guitar and piano, Thompson on double bass, and Jackson on mandocello, violin and flute, they hatched *Avocet* at Sweet Silence studios in Copenhagen in one week. Shifting tempos and moods, the 18-minute title-track is a tightrope walk of sustained daring, and though you can hear the moment on Bittern when Thompson's cuff-link caught on his strings, it only signals in-the-moment adventure. Exquisite lo-fi live versions of three *Avocet* tracks Jansch and Jackson earlier performed in Italy without Thompson are accessible via download code, to augment this Jansch fan favourite.

*James McNair*

## Various

★★★★

Send I A Lion: A Nighthawk Reggae Joint

OMNIVORE. CD/DL/LP

**Boss sampler compiled by the label's producer.**

Leroy Jodie Pierson started Nighthawk as a blues label in 1974 but switched focus in '79 after moving to Kingston, Jamaica, where he teamed with engineer Sylvan Morris at Harry J studio and began producing the cream of roots reggae – Culture, The Gladiators, Justin Hinds, Junior Byles. Pierson had a knack for facilitating his artists' best performances. Plying Joseph Hill of Culture with Red Label wine, he captures the group live and energised as Hill sings from the heart; Justin Hinds with the Wailers band behind him is deliciously soulful and tender; The Gladiators are dreader than dread on reworkings of Studio 1 material. Also included: the first-time issue of The Mighty Diamonds' 4000 Years audition. Featuring singer Tabby playing battered four-string box guitar and Bunny Diamond on phone book, it's raw, impassioned, vital.

*Lois Wilson*

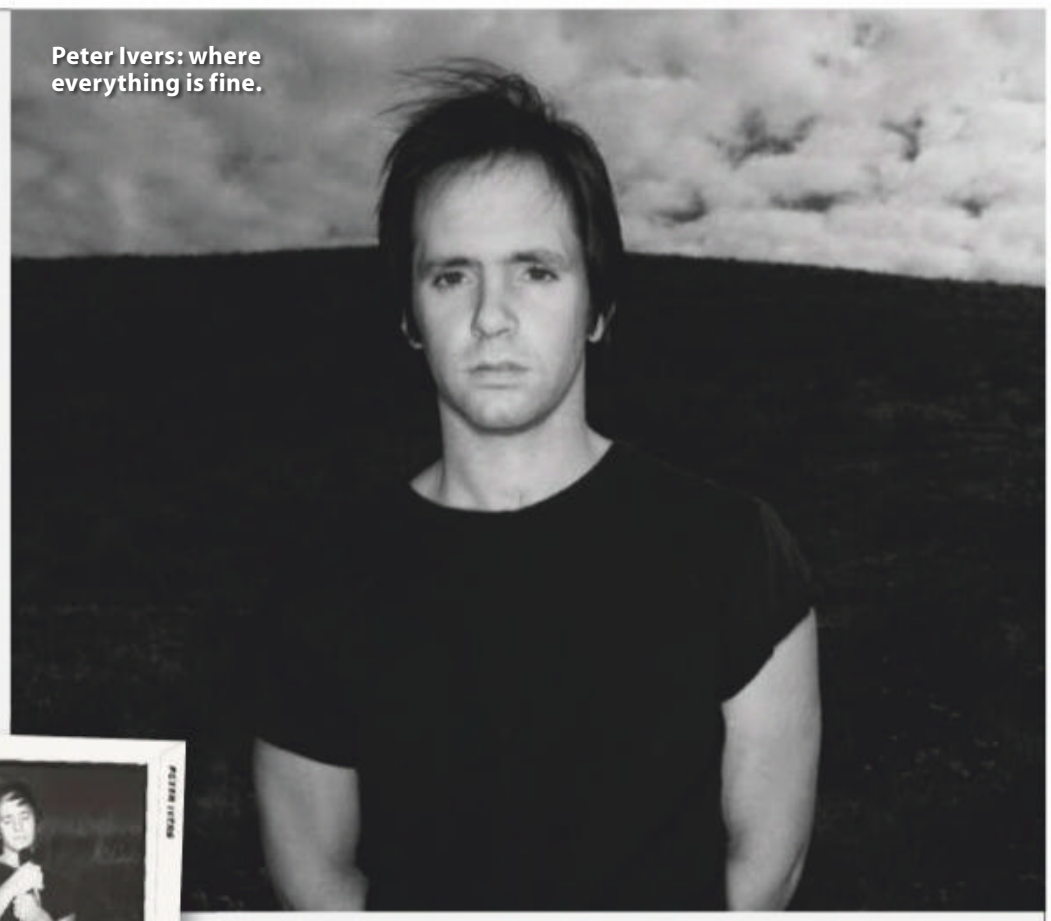
## Peter Ivers

★★★★

Becoming Peter Ivers

RVNG INTL. CD/DL/LP

**Demos, outtakes and studio sessions from the '70s singer-songwriter who wrote In Heaven for David Lynch's Eraserhead.**



Peter Ivers: where everything is fine.

IN 1976, Peter Ivers was living the life. An Illinois-born Harvard classics graduate signed to Warner Brothers for $100,000, with a pad in Laurel Canyon, and friends including John Belushi, Chevy Chase, Van Dyke Parks, and members of the Los Angeles punk fraternity. Six years later he was dead, murdered in his home by an assailant who was never found. With a voice that sounded like Blossom Dearie crossed with Daniel Johnston, and a harmonica style learned directly from Little Walter, Ivers created sui generis art-pop miniatures and proto-new-wave groovers that now suggest an off-Broadway musical about LA burnout, scored by Gene Ween and Jake Shears. On this lovingly assembled collection of previously unreleased recordings, Ivers' songs also sound disarmingly contemporary, the ghostly lo-fi atmospherics drawing out the themes of loneliness, doubt and unrequited love at their core.

*Andrew Male*

## The Rain Parade

★★★★

Emergency Third Rail Power Trip

REAL GONE MUSIC. LP

**Thirty-six years after its first release, formative Paisley Underground LP on vinyl.**

Formed in 1981, by Minnesota college pals Matt Piucci and future Opal/Mazzy Star alumnus David Roback, The Rain Parade were a key band of the Paisley Underground, a mid-'80s neo-psych movement based in LA that embraced everything from the West Coast '60s pop of the Bangles to The Long Ryders' trippy country-rock and the amphetamine Velvets murk of The Dream Syndicate. Of all the groups, the Parade sat most outside the times, harking back to the fuzzed sound of *5D*-era Byrds, The Electric Prunes and the Vox wah wah pedal. Listening now, on well-remastered orange starburst vinyl, the Parade also sound ironically ahead of their time, locked in a languid drone of failed romance and small dreams that predates such indie psych revivalists as Beach Fossils and Real Estate.

*Andrew Male*

Moshe Brakha

## Dion DiMucci

★★★

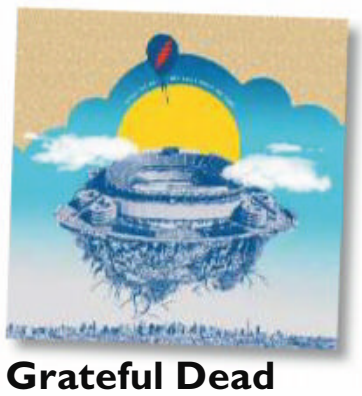
Ruby Baby/Donna The Prima Donna

ACE. CD

**Dion's post-rocker, pre-folk-rock in-between period.**

"Honey, you got soul!" said Little Richard's mother to Dion after she heard his version of Leiber & Stoller's Ruby Baby. "I never forgot that," said the teen heart-throb. In addition to that powerful feeling and those good looks, Dion had perfect vocal chops. Like peer Bobby Darin, he tackled all types of music – and nailed them all. On the first of this double-header reissue of 1962-63 recordings, he seems to be casting about through Al Jolson and Russ Morgan chestnuts and R&B standards, trying different hats on, all sung credibly – even *incredibly* – yet they lack originality. On the second, he returns to earlier rock'n'roll sounds, but there are hints of the blues and country he'd soon blend for a hybrid that was nudged by hearing Dylan – and yet was all Dion.

*Michael Simmons*



## Grateful Dead

★★★★

Giants Stadium 1987, 1989, 1991

RHINO. CD/DL/LP

**Five full shows, including famed 1991 concert, also sold as stand-alone.**

The relationship among the Dead, their fans, and particular locales was such that, together, they could repeatedly transform an 80,000-seat concrete bowl into a forge for blistering sets. Among these shows, 1987 is the warm-up. The band's deftness owes less to their new status as unlikely MTV stars, and more to their role that summer backing Bob Dylan. In *'89*, Jerry Garcia ignites Not Fade Away as if the band had just that very day fallen in love with it. But the standout is a beloved night from 1991, in which the group – augmented then by Bruce Hornsby – visits Dark Star no fewer than four times. Deadheads with keen ears can even hear Hornsby sprinkle the song's riff inside Dylan's When I Paint My Masterpiece. It's the quintessential show for twilight-era Dead, the band still tripping curiously into uncharted realms.

*Chris Nelson*

Allen Beaulieu

## Polly Niles

★★★

Sunshine In My Rainy Day Mind

CHERRY RED. CD/DL

**1970 lost album from cult singer, actor, model.**

From Staten Island, Polly Niles was a trained singer and actor who came to London in 1969, made an album and a couple of singles for Ember, which were never issued, then returned to the States to appear in the Superfly film before concentrating on family. The album, issued here for the first time with a disc of alternate takes, captures Niles in a series of musical settings from supper club to protest rally, soul basement and counterculture happening. Perhaps her downfall was that she could do it all and did, although her timing wasn't great either – arriving after Dusty, Sandie, Lulu et al. Nevertheless, the performances are at times mesmerising: witness the hallucinogenic caress of the title track; the soulful melodrama of Since I Lost You Baby and her throaty cover of For What It's Worth.

*Lois Wilson*

## Tina Brooks

★★★★

Minor Move

BLUE NOTE. LP

**Classic jazz reclaimed from the archives.**

For many years deemed a one-album wonder, tenor saxophonist Harold 'Tina' Brooks had, in fact, recorded four LPs for Blue Note between 1958 and 1961, but only *True Blue* came out during his lifetime. His career blighted by drug addiction, Brooks died in 1974. Six years later, *Minor Move*, his debut Blue Note session from 1958, was finally exhumed from the vaults for release in Japan. It's now reissued on LP for the first time since then and finds the North Carolinian leading a quintet that includes such stellar names as Lee Morgan, Sonny Clark and Art Blakey. Though it was his debut, the then 26-year-old saxophonist sounds relaxed and assured, even putting the dazzling Lee Morgan in the shade on material that ranges from self-penned hard bop swingers (Nutville) to smoky slow standards (Everything Happens To Me).

*Charles Waring*

**"Pinpointing what would make him a superstar": Prince imagines his 1999 in 1982.**

# Lord of the dance

The album that got the purple party started, expanded to five discs. By **Tom Doyle**.

## Prince

★★★★

1999 (Super Deluxe Edition)

WARNER BROS. CD/DL/LP/DVD

*1999* WAS Prince's big transitional album. After shapeshifting over the previous four years from one-man disco band into a bikini-briefs-and-raincoat-wearing new wave/funk flasher, and then into a regal dandy, he finally became, well, *Prince*. His first double LP, the format of the 1982 record allowed him to stretch out – where the title track of its '81 predecessor *Controversy* was seven minutes long, the relentless groove of D.M.S.R. spilled over into nine.

Though the album was also his first to feature The Revolution, in reality they appeared here mainly in a vocally supportive role, with Prince sometimes throwing over to Dez Dickerson for a guitar solo. Instead, the driving force of *1999* is the Linn drum machine, modified and warped to Prince's specifications to create a signature sound that would recur through the rest of his career.

If 1999, the hit single, brilliantly updated George Clinton's funk formula for the '80s, and still sounds as fresh and vital today, some facets of its parent album haven't weathered well. Particularly its Tap-esque "what's wrong with sexy?" elements – the "amorous" declaration at the tail end of Let's Pretend We're Married ("I sincerely wanna fuck the taste out of your mouth") is creepy and predatory; Lisa Coleman being heard to scream "Please help me! Somebody help me!" at the close of D.M.S.R. is simply disturbing and horrible.

Offsetting all of this is Prince's uncharacteristic fretting about his sexual adequacy in Little Red Corvette, the greatest and most nuanced song he'd written thus far. Better on the weirdness front was the fact that here was an artist prepared to break all the rules: the alien electro shapes of Something In The Water (Does Not Compute) pre-echoes the stranger sonic adventures of *Purple Rain* and beyond.

This expansive 5-CD remaster offers the original album, promo mixes and B-sides, and a live set from Detroit in November 1982. But the two discs enticingly labelled Vault are the ones everyone will likely play first. Some of these unreleased works-in-progress come across like guaranteed hits casually dumped onto the cutting room floor – the bouncy, indefatigable Turn It Up, the in-the-pocket swing of Bold Generation, demoed for The Time. Others are simply curios: the 10-minute anti-drug messaging Purple Music, the cod reggae-ish If It'll Make U Happy. Meanwhile, Yah, You Know seems to offer proof that Prince was a big fan of Soft Cell's percussive 1981 synth take on Tainted Love.

Welcome, too, is the inclusion of an hour-long DVD live performance from Houston in December 1982, originally filmed solely for his own reference. It's easy to imagine Prince watching it, observing himself and pinpointing what would make him a superstar. Significantly, a lot of these stage moves were repeated to great effect in the Purple Rain film.

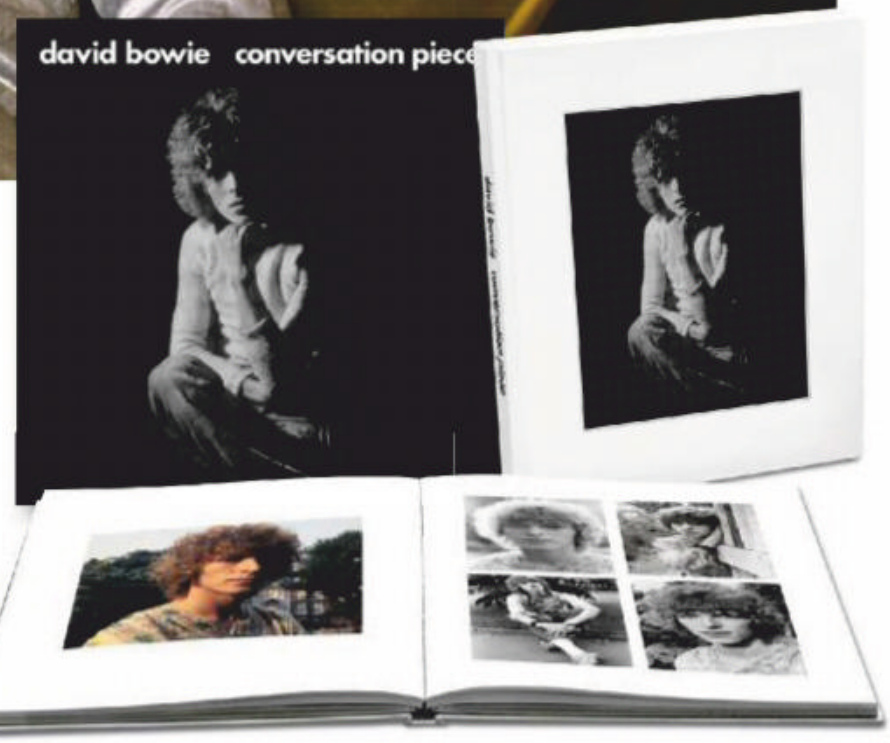
For all its ups and downs, hits and misses, *1999 Super Deluxe* is a fascinating document of a liberating and hyper-productive period. Boiled down to its essence, it's the sound (and sight) of Prince letting his creative freak flag fly.

David Bowie: wild-eyed boy from Freecloud.

FILE UNDER...

# Commencing countdown

Bowie's second self-titled album, now 50 years old, comes back in a great big box. By **Jim Irvin**.




BE HONEST: though attracted by a scent of time warp and illicit rarity that's catnip for collectors, how often do you revisit archival, *Anthology*-style releases after the first excited pounce? Anyone still rinsing *The John Lennon Anthology*, for example? Boxes of dry-runs, chuck-outs and bootlegged fragments can serve to dilute rather than enhance an artist's prime catalogue, shine a mundane light upon it. If you're struggling to stay upright in the recent deluge of live Bowie albums and vinyl box sets, I wouldn't blame you. Since his passing, aside from the excellent era-covering collections, like *Five Years*, there have been some baffling Bowie releases.

But *Conversation Piece* ★★★, a big 5-CD overview of the period around his debut album for Philips, *David Bowie* (AKA *Space Oddity*) upon its 50th anniversary, presents some genuinely fascinating stuff. CD 1 is Bowie's recorded diary of 1968, 12 songs demoed alone in flats at 39 Manchester Street and 22 Clareville Grove, London that year, five further songs and three versions of Space Oddity (with a slightly different lyric) recorded with friend John 'Hutch' Hutchinson early in 1969, plus three more solo demos from the same period. (Tracks 4-13 on this disc made up the *Spying Through A Keyhole* vinyl box released earlier this year; tracks 15-20 came out as *Clareville Grove Demos*).

Bowie the early adopter of The Velvet Underground isn't audible here, but there's Barretty psych in The Reverend Raymond Brown, cute 'Teenage Opera' novelty in When I'm Five, and hippy whimsy on Animal Farm: "She sits drinking the morning papers and reading the tea." April's Tooth Of Gold, which opens, could easily have cropped up later, its chugging rhythm is T.Rexy and the post-chorus bass part reminiscent of Jean Genie. Angel Angel Grubby Face is a sophisticated bit of writing, a song about the uncertainty of young love, without saying as much. All decent material, shoddily recorded, but hardly a patch on Space Oddity, which Bowie obviously knew was a cracker, because he kept working at it and improving it. There are 11 different versions of it here, all told.

CD 2 covers the 'Mercury' demos (also released on vinyl earlier this year), 10 songs cut as a continuous audition tape for the label with Hutchinson, shortly after their group Feathers – which also included Bowie's ex Hermione Farthingale – had disbanded. Only four of these songs made the actual album. Feathers' sole recording, Ching-A-Ling (the three take a verse each), features on CD 3 with some late Decca demos from March 1968, a surprisingly elaborate John Peel radio 14-strong Tony Visconti Orchestra, more tilts at Space Oddity – first studio version, eventual single mix – and another BBC session featuring three songs from the 1969 album.

CDs 4 and 5 feature that album's original mix and a bold 2019 remix by Visconti. Unwashed And Somewhat Slightly Dazed has more reverb at the front and more punch at the end, omitting the Don't Sit Down coda. Letter To Hermione, originally murky, is now sweet and clear. The Wild-Eyed Boy From Freecloud's buried voice is resurrected. Memory Of A Free Festival is improved with a beautifully present vocal and a bigger, more rousing finish. If you're a huge fan of the original album's flaws you may not approve, but plenty of wonk remains in those arrangements. These more open and dynamic mixes serve the material well.

**"Bowie obviously knew Space Oddity was a cracker."**

We weren't privy to the packaging for review, but musically, this is another well-curated super-serving for the super-fan. If you love the 1969 album you'll need to hear it, I'm afraid.

David Bebbington/Avalon

## Joe Meek

★★★

I Hear A New World

CHERRY RED. CD

**Subtitled *The Pioneers Of Electronic Music, An Outer Space Music Fantasy.***

The seeds of producer Joe Meek's space programme-obsessed 1962 hit Telstar were sown two years earlier on *I Hear A New World*, an album which, bar a four-track EP that emerged as a taster, wasn't properly released until 1991. It blended the conventional (Meek's skiffle clients The Blue Men) with the decidedly unconventional: noodling, inspired fragments, distorted vocals, an emptying sink and moments of wonder such as the gently demented March Of The Dribcots. Remarkably, Meek wasn't operating in a bubble. Across London, the BBC Radiophonic Workshop were similarly space-obsessed. And in Europe, contemporaries including Pierre Boulez and Luc Ferrari in France; the sinister Hollander Tom Dissevelt and Jonny Greenwood's beloved Olivier Messiaen were operating in similar territory, and their minimalist space magic enhances a three-disc treasure trove of wondrous strangeness. This was how an era's musical trailblazers thought the future might sound.

*John Aizlewood*

## Makoto Terashita Meets Harold Land

★★★★

Topology

BBE. CD/DL/LP

**Super-rare east-west jazz summit reissued.**

This unlikely alliance between an unknown 32-year-old Japanese pianist/composer and 54-year-old world-renowned American tenor saxophonist came about during June 1984 when they met for the first time in a Tokyo studio. The resulting album, released as a limited run of 500 copies by a small Japanese label, Aketa's Disk, grew in reputation over the years to become a much-revered cult classic, with originals selling for several hundred pounds. But now the album has an opportunity to find a wider audience outside of Japan. It's an absorbing listen, with Dragon Dance, a Latin-tinged modal piece penned by Terashita, and the deeply reflective Land-written World Peace, being the chief highlights. Despite their cultural and generational differences, there's a tangible simpatico between the two main protagonists here, who conspire to make this session an eminently memorable one.

*Charles Waring*

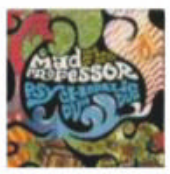
## Mad Professor

★★★★

Dub Me Crazy Part 10: Psychedelic Dub

ARIWA. CD/DL/LP

**Broad-spectrum dub disc from 1990.**




Audio technician Neil Fraser became the Mad Professor upon establishing Ariwa Sounds in his south London front room as a vehicle for roots reggae and lovers rock. The *Dub Me Crazy* series began in 1982 and by the end of the decade, Prof's dubs were straddling multiple subgenres. *Psychedelic Dub* thus has huge variance, as tough instru-dub workouts from Rico Rodriguez and saxophonist Michael 'Bami' Rose sit alongside hard-edged digital ragamuffin rhythms, originally cut for such as Crucial Robbie. Raging Storm reconfigures both Kofi's take on The Impressions' I'm So Proud and Macka B's toasting version, Proud Of Mandela, while Macka's Get Rid Of Maggie is dubbed down to its bare bones. Flushing toilets, reverberating keyboards, saucy horns, sequenced beats and percolating electronic percussion keep things spacy throughout, resulting in maximal 3-D dub contours. Play loud for best effect.

*David Katz*

## Stereolab

★★★★

Emperor Tomato Ketchup

WARP/DUOPHONIC. CD/DL/LP

**Sauce code: expansion pack for avant-pop groop's imperial-phase album.**

The second stage of Stereolab's reissue programme – imagine Tim Gane and Laetitia Sadier launching gleaming modules from a NASA-style control panel – includes the glinting circuitry of 1997's *Dots And Loops* and the jazz fussiness of 1999's *Cobra And Phases Group Play Voltage In The Milky Night*. 1996's *Emperor Tomato Ketchup* remains the essential release – not as accessible as the op-art installations of predecessor *Mars Audiac Quintet* but still a multifaceted flowering of their experimental vision. With John McEntire co-producing, it shows them finding new ways to solder music and message together, from the urgent funk of Metronomic Underground and dappled strings of Cybele's Reverie to the state-TV kids' broadcast of Motoroller Scalatron. Meanwhile, demos and outtakes, including Japanese single Freestyle Dumpling, embrace those reluctant to leave Stereolab's bubble.

*Victoria Segal*

Brian Griffin

**The Pop Group: preparing to leap into the void.**

# Y Wanna Be Anarchy!

How five Bristol beatniks freaked out post-punk. By **John Mulvey**.

## The Pop Group

★★★★

Y

MUTE. CD/DL/LP/MC

IN MARCH 1979, an ambitious but volatile new band from Bristol played a gig at the Locarno discotheque in Portsmouth. They were called The Pop Group, but the music they made – an unholy mêlée of new wave bravado, free jazz skronk, chasmic dub and something resembling funk as reimagined by The Magic Band – was anathema to both pop fans and the punks who'd gathered at the venue. During the gig, Melody Maker's Richard Williams observed, the stage was invaded by onlookers protesting "What a load of crap!" Some of the band, in a spirit of radical democracy, tried to integrate the dissenters into their set; the punks were unconvinced. "ANARCHY! ANARCHY! ANARCHY!" one shouted into the mike, as a band who embodied that principal more potently than any of their contemporaries looked on.

Too anarchic for punk, too weird for post-punk, too chaotic even for their own good, The Pop Group's initial run of records saw the possibilities of the late-'70s music scene being tested to their utmost. The group might have formed while driving to London for a night at the Roxy, but by the time debut album *Y* was released in 1979, they were trying to reconcile the era's DIY spirit with the heady musical chops of Ornette Coleman and Eric Dolphy; a kind of harmolodics for beginners. As a result, much of *Y* – now remastered and lavishly expanded – could be dismissed as five musicians heading off on their own bloody-minded tangents, produced by a reggae auteur, Dennis Bovell, whose instinct was to isolate those vectors rather than at least try and unify them.

Forty intervening years of post-punk and punk-funk being variously revived, commodified and assimilated have done nothing to dilute the shock of, say, Snow Girl, wherein chicken scratch guitars circumnavigate stop-start rhythms, a cocktail pianist has a breakdown and Mark Stewart, the perpetually hectoring MC, attempts a falsetto croon. The sense of a band making it up on the fly is all-encompassing. No one seems to have a clue what might happen next. It sounds extraordinary.

*Alien Blood* (*Y*'s working title), an extra disc of early versions and mixes, reveals how awkwardness was always critical to the Pop Group MO. The "Ricochet" version of *Y*'s most accessible song, We Are Time, makes Bovell's cut-up experiments even more abrasive and disorienting; a dub-industrial Teo Macero. Kiss The Book, a song that didn't make the original album, features the most clenched anti-harmonies imaginable. Nine exhilarating live tracks are actually tighter than might be expected, thanks in no small part to the rigour and elasticity of the Simon Underwood (bass) and Bruce Smith (drums) rhythm section.

*Y Live* presents a remarkable band on-stage – as, indeed, the reconfigured 21st century Pop Group still are. Their improvisational daring was not, however, one that had much contemporary appeal beyond an avant-gardish clique. John Lydon had his Sex Pistols reputation to sustain PiL's experiments; The Pop Group were leaping into the void.

"It was like a Sham 69 gig," lamented guitarist John Waddington after the Portsmouth punks' stage invasion. The Pop Group's artistic blessing, and their commercial curse, was that nothing could have been further from the truth.

## Various

★★★

Fania Goes Psychedelic

CRAFT LATINO. DL

**Musical excess in the 1960s, Fania style.**

Founded in New York in 1964 by Dominican bandleader Johnny Pacheco and cop-turned-lawyer Jerry Masucci, Fania Records swiftly became the main entity promoting the salsa music hybrid, which blended elements of Cuban son with Puerto Rican bomba and other Latin and Afro-Caribbean styles. As the form evolved, the emerging English-language boogaloo subgenre aimed to broaden the music's appeal for non-Latino audiences. Being very much a New York affair, the label's output was rooted in the city's urban experiences, and this digital retrospective collects 15 Fania tracks influenced by the 1960s hippy counterculture, with Ray Barretto's Acid, George Guzman's Banana Freak Out and The LeBron Brothers' Let's Get Stoned being prime examples of the resultant over-the-top musical kinkiness. Elsewhere, Harvey Averne's Got To Have Brotherhood sounds like a Motown outtake and Joey Pastrana's Problems is a broken-hearted slice of Afro-Latin blues.

*David Katz*

## Various

★★★★

Body Beat: Soca-Dub And Electronic Calypso (1979-98)

SOUNDWAY. CD/DL/LP

**Both uplifting party playlist and history lesson on music with its roots in calypso.**

"Just like a bird of a new nation you came into the people's heart… soca music," Levi John's vocal floats above an intoxicating rhythm that connects Trinidad, New York and Bollywood. John's 1980 flipside S-O-C-A is a trance inducing piece combining jazz piano and sax, dub from the outer limits and disco. It's one of the earliest tracks on this superb collection that reveals a genre that's fluid and has a no-borders attitude to influence. One of the later tracks, Brother Resistance's Move It, from 1997, meshes social conscience reggae with rap and Trinidad masquerade culture. In between, technological advances dictate direction: Roger Bain's instrumental Stand Up & Rock Your Body and Colin Jackman's D'Jab Jab Dance both look to house music innovations for their blueprint.

*Lois Wilson*

## Various

★★★★

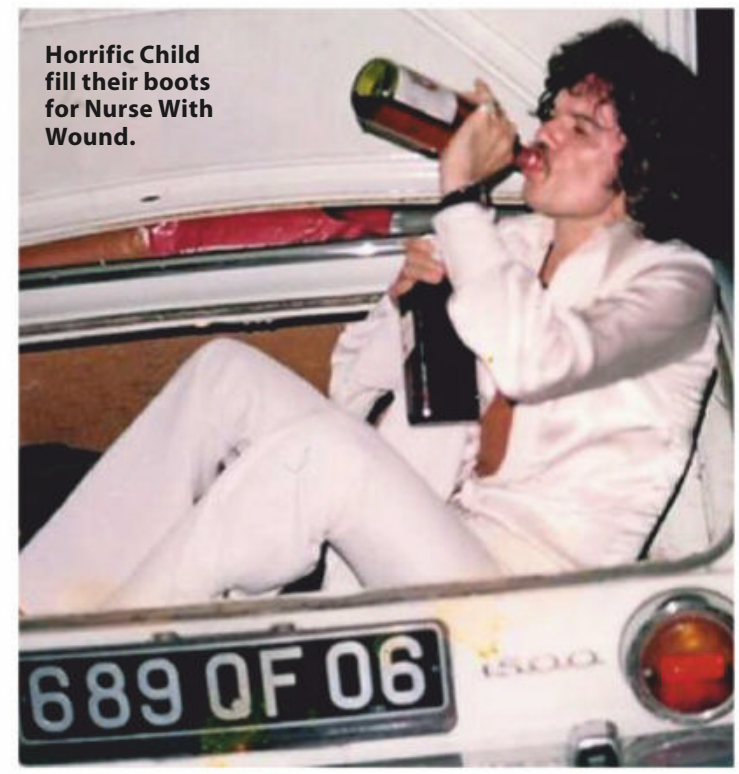
Strain, Crack And Break: Music From The Nurse With Wound List Volume One (France)

FINDERS KEEPERS. DL/LP

**NWW-curated obscurities of French underground post-'68 redefines 'progressive'.**

Back in 1979, Nurse With Wound was a refuge when Throbbing Gristle got too commercial. Now, such is NWW's outsider music status that a list of influences on their debut LP – once deemed so obscure as to be fictional – has become a holy grail for crate-diggers. This first-in-a-series compilation chronicles the List's French connections, forged in the pandemonium of Paris '68 and voyaging into rock's remotest regions signposted by Magma and *musique concrète*. It's a collection of curios that, like *Nuggets*, remaps history: This Heat as performed by the Marx Brothers (Jacques Thollot), spiritual jazz meets radical Roxy (Mahjun). Meanwhile, Horrific Child channel Arthur Brown's Kingdom Come, Red Noise freak out Sorbonne-style, and Etron Fou Leloublan serve up super-noodly "mad shit" (the band's name, translated). Instant classic comp.

*Mark Paytress*




**Horrific Child fill their boots for Nurse With Wound.**

## Keely Smith

★★★

You're Breaking My Heart

REAL GONE MUSIC/KEELY. CD/DL

**Long-lost UK recording session from Louis Prima's poker-faced straight woman.**

In 1965, revered US jazz vocalist Keely Smith took time out from working with her former husband, Louis Prima, on their wild Vegas-style showcase of R&B and New Orleans jazz to cut an album of Beatles covers that broke the UK Top 20. A Top 15 single followed and the 37-year-old part-Irish part-Native-American singer suddenly found herself recording at Pye studios for Reprise, and produced by hotshot 26-year-old British producer and songwriter, Tony Hatch. Unfortunately, Hatch's first song for Smith, Call Me, was shelved, becoming a worldwide hit for Chris Montez a year later instead. Now added to this subsequent hard-to-find UK-only release, mastered from Keely's own master-tapes, the Call Me demo completes a glorious selection of pop, jazz, country, ballads and show tunes, invested with Keely's trademark boho cool and deadpan sensuality.

*Andrew Male*

## R.O.C.

★★★★

Virgin

12 APOSTLES. CD/DL

**Brixton electro mavericks' second album, titled after their then-label.**

As this year's re-formation album *Bile & Celestial Beauty* reminded us, R.O.C. were always too mercurial to pin down. Their base was electronica, but they specialised in intriguing tangents and when they signed to Virgin for 1997's *Virgin* and Radiohead's Ed O'Brien declared himself a fan, the world seemed to be theirs. It wasn't, of course, but they didn't come any closer than the epic sadness of Mountain; the glorious swell of Corner Off 1-25; the oddly poppy (Dis) Count Us In, flock of sheep and all, and Dada's sampling of Ugandan President Idi Amin Dada. There was even what sounded like a straight love song – Ocean & England – to close things. In the end, like so many before them, they were felled by the double whammy of internal label politics and no hits, but with a little luck, they might have cracked it.

*John Aizlewood*

## The Lee Riders

★★★

The Lee Riders

HIGH ON THE PYGTRACK/SOFT CLOUD. CD

**Bowie-reviled country rockers from Woodstock get their day in the sun.**

In April 1972, The Lee Riders supported David Bowie in Harlow on the Ziggy Stardust tour. The headliner's PA and lights were off limits. Riders' bassist Mike Reilly recalls Bowie was "pretty upset that some fucked country band was stuck on the bill with him." Reilly's outfit were formed in Woodstock by Florida musician Robert Lee as a vehicle to get a contract with Dylan's manager Albert Grossman. That didn't happen, but the band signed with United Artists, moved to the UK in 1971 and recorded their sole album in London. Sales were minimal. Lee and co's unsurprisingly Band-esque country rock was self-possessed and had funk undertones but wasn't in tune with the Britpop of 1972. However, all was not lost as Reilly went on to the similarly minded Pure Prairie League. Despite Bowie's reservations, this is unfamiliar country rock worth revisiting.

*Kieron Tyler*

## VINYL PACKAGE OF THE MONTH

## James Brown

Live At Home With His Bad Self

REPUBLIC/UMC. CD/DL/LP

ON OCTOBER 1, 50 years ago, James Brown returned to base in Augusta, GA, and put on a typically fevered show at the Bell Auditorium, a performance full of hard-driving soul, bravura ballads, and punchy funk. But he'd soon sack his disgruntled band, recruiting Bootsy and Phelps Collins and friends, the projected live album shelved in favour of a blend of live and studio tracks released as the *Sex Machine* double album. Here, putting the double record straight and ditching the studio tracks, are the set's 18 songs, all remixed, seven of them previously unreleased; thus a track like Give It Up Or Turnit A Loose now features as an unstoppable runaway train of guitar-drums-driven funk. Two of the tracks, truncated on the original, are presented as they were on-stage – almost double the length – and who wouldn't want to hear as much as possible of funk tempest There Was A Time? You'd need a huge banks of synths and machines to duplicate such raw power. Also available as a single CD and download.

*Geoff Brown*

## Various

★★★★

Factory Communications 1978-92

★★★★

Factory 40 (Use Hearing Protection)

RHINO VINYL+. LP

**Fac forever – with two anniversary boxes.**

The label's been filmed, stamped, indexed and numbered repeatedly, but the ongoing Factory Records debrief shows no sign of tiring. The sounds on *Factory Communications 1978-92* – as good a label overview as you'll find – demonstrate why. A 2008 CD box reimagined on eight pieces of silver vinyl, it finds acts both great and small and a label fuelled by intelligence and lunacy working in perfect accord (New Order, yes, but don't forget Minny Pops, Section 25 and the other curios, dance heads and jazzers that make for such wired listening). For the admirer with more cash to splash, the *Factory 40 (Use Hearing Protection)* box collects facsimiles of the first 10 Factory releases, namely records, posters and a design for the famed Menstrual Egg-Timer, plus an unedited two-disc interview encounter with Joy Division in 1979 and the fascinating film short No City Fun. The Haçienda's *still* being built, then.

*Ian Harrison*

## Gene Clark

★★★★

No Other

4AD. CD/DL/LP

**The ex-Byrd's greatest solo flight (see feature in MOJO 312) gets first-class reissue.**

In 1974, Gene Clark was still waiting for take-off on his own. *No Other* was designed to break the hex: eight songs of profound despair and introspective challenge scored with Phil Spector-like dimension, suggesting Love's *Forever Changes* in Topanga Canyon-country hues. But that eccentric majesty and seeking landed flat; Clark's solo career stayed a what-if story. This aptly indulgent box set frames the original, misunderstood album in early sessions that magnify the emotional force and earthy dynamic inside the finesse. Alternate versions of Silver Raven and Some Misunderstanding, minus the double-tracking of Clark's vocals, highlight the loneliness in his pure, plaintive singing; the stately, spiritual crisis of *No Other* comes to first light as spooky, percussive voodoo. The working drafts may have comprised a more direct, accessible album. But this monument to Clark's troubled masterpiece shows how deep and far he was willing to go to capture – and share – the salvation in a song.

*David Fricke*

## The Pooh Sticks

★★★★

The Pooh Sticks 7-Inch Box Set

OPTIC NERVE. LP

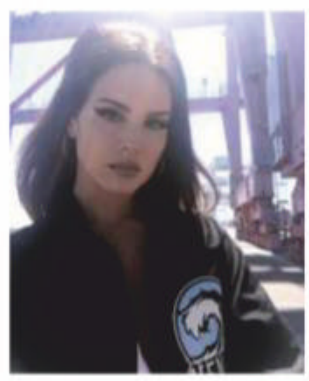
**1988 45s box set, now with bonus B-sides and booklet.**

Indie pop ain't noise pollution. Indeed in The Pooh Sticks' hands it was a joyous burst of DIY bubblegum and post punk irreverence. Formed in Swansea in 1987, their second release was a 200 copies-only box set of five one-sided singles. The idea was inspired by Moby Grape, who did something similar, and the aim, band leader Huw Williams said, was commercial suicide. And yet, reissued here with great care on coloured vinyl, it still sounds gorgeous, from 123 Red Light – John Peel opened his show with it five nights in a row – to the effervescent Double Shot and I Know Someone Who Knows Someone Who Knows Alan McGee Quite Well. "Now that The Smiths have split/I heard he [Geoff Travis] thinks we're going to be it!" they cheer on the latter. And for a brief moment, they were.

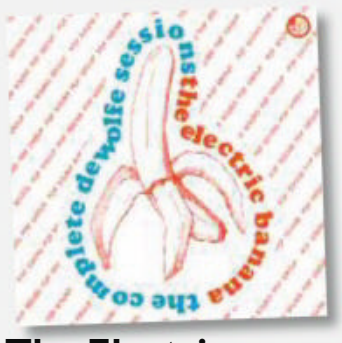
*Lois Wilson*

## COMING NEXT MONTH...

**Lana Del Rey (below), Fat White Family, Nilsson, Talk Talk, Lee Perry, Everything But The Girl, Curtis Mayfield, The Band, Pete Townshend and more…**



# REISSUES EXTRA




## The Electric Banana

★★★

The Complete De Wolfe Sessions

GRAPEFRUIT. CD

Or, when The Pretty Things made library music for TV and film (Dr Who! Norman Wisdom!), under a pseudonym. Three late-'60s LPs of light beat with brass, hard rock and wah wah psych. Unusual. *IH*

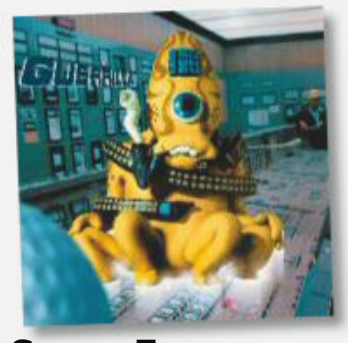
## Griot Galaxy

★★★

Kins

THIRD MAN. LP

From 1982, a Detroit jazz rarity that might be categorised as Afro-futurist no-wave; imagine Sun Ra appearing on *No New York*, roughly. A mixed but invigorating bag, where unstable avant-funk (Zenolog Aintro) jostles alongside almost Moondog-ish syncopations (Androgeny). *JM*



## Super Furry Animals

★★★★

Guerrilla

BMG. LP

Turning 20 this month, SFA's cuddly third, now 2-LPs with 20-track CD rarities comp *My Eyes Began To Grow Into Telescopes*, compiled by Kliph Scurlock who cleans up the Ewloe demos (see 10-minute wonk Wherever I Lay My Phone…) a treat. *JB*

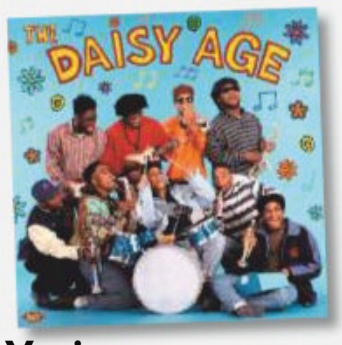
## Various

★★★★

Dave Godin's Deep Soul Treasures Volume 5

KENT SOUL. CD

Fifteen years after his death, Godin delivers another 25 ballads of pain, heartache and pleading that'll also uplift. Familiars (Gladys Knight, James Carr) are for once upstaged by Judy White, Dee Dee Warwick and Carolyn Sullivan's stark Dead! *GB*




## Various

★★★★

The Daisy Age

ACE. CD

De La Soul, A Tribe Called Quest, Jungle Brothers, Queen Latifah, Brand Nubian, Digital Underground, Digable Planets and other Native Tongues-affiliated hip hoppers bring prime, Day-Glo 1989-94 rap cuts with the funkiest breaks, superior sampling and gushing, positive creativity. Total fun for your brain. *IH*

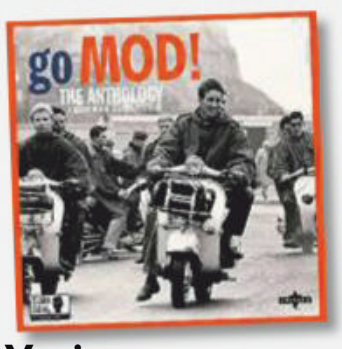
## Various

★★★★

Studio One DJ Party

SOUL JAZZ. CD/DL/LP

A scorcher-filled 18-track sample of Studio One's DJ 45 archive offers up some rarely heard gems – Kentrus's It A Fi Bun; Screechie Dan's We A Don – amid the hardy perennials. Lone Ranger appears twice, (including Apprentice Dentist, from '77 classic *On The Other Side Of Dub*), ditto Prince Jazzbo. Other hits: Mad Roy, Big Joe, King Stitt, Dillinger et al. *KC*



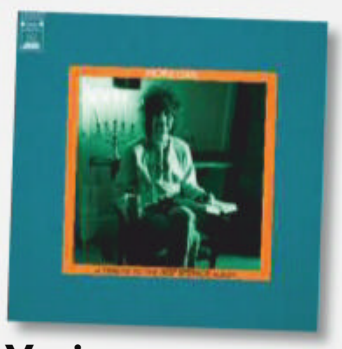

## Various

★★★

Go Mod! The Anthology

CHARLY. LP

This 16-track double vinyl gatefold-sleeved snapshot spanning 1957 to '67 is aimed at beginners with a tracklisting weighted towards the big hitters; Green Onions, Night Train, Barefootin', Oh Carolina. Chris Farlowe's Buzz With The Fuzz represents the London boys. All of them great, of course. *LW*



## Various

★★★★

More Oar

MODERN HARMONIC. CD/LP

First time on vinyl, this 1999 tribute to Moby Grape founder Skip Spence set a high bar for tribute albums: big names, all bespoke covers, (nearly) all great; Robert Plant's restrained Little Hands and Mudhoney's saucer-eyed War In Peace especially. Bonus: Flaming Lips' own bouncy Little Hands, intended as a collaboration with Plant. *JB*

## Various

★★★★

Love Is All I Bring

TROJAN. CD/DL/LP

Hits and curios highlight the women of Trojan: Marcia Griffiths, Phyllis Dillon, Althea & Donna, Millie Small, Sonia Pottinger productions. Of the rarities, This Is Me (AKA If Your Name Is Andy) from 1970 is a salty ska nugget by Dorothy Reid (of the duo Dotty And Bonny), once miscredited to 'Phillis Dillion'. *CP*

## RATINGS & FORMATS

Your guide to the month's best music is now even more definitive with our handy format guide.

CD COMPACT DISC DL DOWNLOAD ST STREAMING LP VINYL
MC CASSETTE DVD DIGITAL VIDEO DISC C IN CINEMAS BR BLU-RAY

★★★★★ MOJO CLASSIC
★★★★ EXCELLENT
★★★ GOOD
★★ DISAPPOINTING
★ BEST AVOIDED
☆ DEPLORABLE

Discord mix: Black Dog Productions (from left, Handley, Downie and Turner) stock up on crazy information.

**CREDITS**

**Tracks:** Object Orient (Plaid) / Caz (Close Up Over) / Carceres Ex Novum (Xeper) / Focus Mel (Atypic) / Olivine (Close Up Over) / Clan (Mongol Hordes) (I.A.O.) / Yamemm (Plaid) / Fight The Hits (Discordian Popes) / Merck (Balil) / Jauqq (Close Up Over) / 3/4 Heart (Balil)

**Producer:** Black Dog Productions

**Released:** March 8, 1993

**Personnel:** Ken Downie, Ed Handley, Andy Turner

**Chart peak:** none

**Current availability:** Warp CD/download

# Bark, Magus

This month's vision of beyond from music's repressed id: occult modulations for techno telepathists.

## Black Dog Productions (Bytes)

WARP, 1993

"WE SAW AN advert in the NME, I think it said, 'Looking for people to make acid house music'," says Andy Turner, recalling when he and Suffolk school friend/production partner Ed Handley met Ken Downie to form The Black Dog in London in 1988. "We went to the first Black Dog Towers on Fitzroy Square, pooled a bit of musical gear, started putting ideas together… the first few tracks were pretty strange. They certainly weren't acid house."

After the ecstasy and house-fuelled second Summer of Love in 1988, the charts welcomed electronic dance tracks by A Guy Called Gerald, Stakker Humanoid, 808 State and others. The acid virus was mutating, as producers looked inwards to zones of the deep brain, with sounds that would later be dubbed intelligent techno, intelligent dance music and even armchair techno. As The Black Dog, Turner, Handley and Downie would also follow this path, releasing left-leaning dance tracks independently. In 1992, they received a fax from Sheffield techno label Warp, whose first *Artificial Intelligence* compilation was crucial in catalysing IDM. *(Bytes)* was duly set in motion, to be credited to Black Dog Productions, and alter-egos including Balil, Close Up Over and Turner and Handley's Plaid, due to possible contractual conflicts.

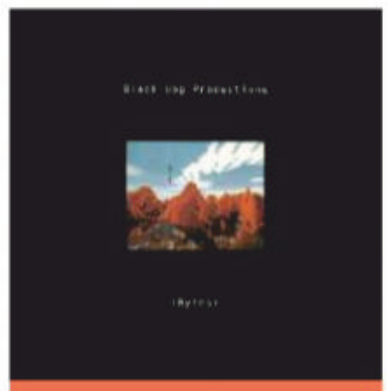
Starting from the end of 1992, recording took place at Turner and Handley's home set- ups in Edmonton and Old Street respectively, and at the Totnes-born Downie's Mile End base Black Dog Towers Two, where their analogue mixing desk was. After finishing their day jobs, they'd record into the night in the small, smoke-filled east London room with an Eraserhead poster on the wall. Handley and Turner worked at their keyboard stands at one end, with Downie with the desk and his PCs and computer servers at the other, bending gear including an Oberheim Matrix 17, a Yamaha DX7 and Roland 303 and 808s into new alien shapes. "Sometimes we'd complete a track in its entirety, others were 50/50," says Turner. "It was a co-operative. There's a style to each of [the tracks], but it seems coherent. It does have kind of a journey to me."

"We were all living in this kind of twilight world," says Handley. "Ken was into paganism and occult stuff, and he ran the [Ur-internet] Bulletin Board System for the Pagan Federation. So, he was an odd character because his conversation would be littered with these references. In the studio you'd see big Linux books and [1937 occult guide] The Golden Dawn. Andy and myself were fairly naïve, from the world of hip-hop and a bit of raving, and we were learning about writing and synthesizers and these esoteric ideas of using your will to create and to better your life. It was a good, weird time, and that was injected into the record. Before, we'd been making beats and asking, Is this funky?"

Still cognisant of dance music's rhythm imperative where others in their milieu were drifting further into ambience, *(Bytes)* is indeed funky, as if for dream parties in shifting alien landscapes of the mind. As melodies drop in and out and insectoid beats stutter and glide, its 11 wordless songs encompass joviality, excitement, melancholy and despair, delivering bio-electrical charges to the brain in ways seemingly immune to pattern or expectation. Credited to Xeper, for example, Downie's Carceres Ex Novum ('The New Prisons') is a paranormal, layered combination of alien desolation and human fragility which suggests Philip Glass and the Fools Gold beat. The rattling Yamemm by Plaid, meanwhile, combines babbling synths and stern enigma to weirdly beckoning effect before turning into hip-hop for giants. Music for the technological future in all its promise and ambiguity, it was ideal post-club listening and a favourite of future BDP collaborator Björk, who called it an "in-your-house-with-your-headphones-on-your-own album, having multiple orgasms."

Concerning the random-yet-ordered, antic nature of the album – carefully designed when the three selected tracks and sequenced them – Handley again cites Downie's arcane interests. "It wasn't the dark, manipulative version of that world," he says. "Ken was a big fan of Robert Anton Wilson [writer of The Illuminatus! Trilogy] and Bob Dobbs and The Church Of The Subgenius. There was a sense of humour about it and a positivity about this idea of chaos and how you can almost delete the intellectual occasionally with an overload of crazy information, which creates a kind of pleasing nothingness at the end of it. Hopefully you can hear that fun in the music."

There was, though, a less carefree side. The group's name, says Turner, had "a connection with the 'Black Dog' as depression – which the music could be a reaction to, as a way to lift the spirits, I suppose. And Ken was very into Egyptology, so there was also Anubis [the dog-headed Egyptian god of death and the underworld]." After 1993's *Temple Of Transparent Balls* and 1995's *Spanners*, Handley and Turner would split with Downie to concentrate on Plaid, citing his reluctance to play live. Plaid released a tenth album, *Polymer*, in June. Downie continues as The Black Dog, his most recent LPs being 2018's *Post-Truth* and *Black Daisy Wheel*.



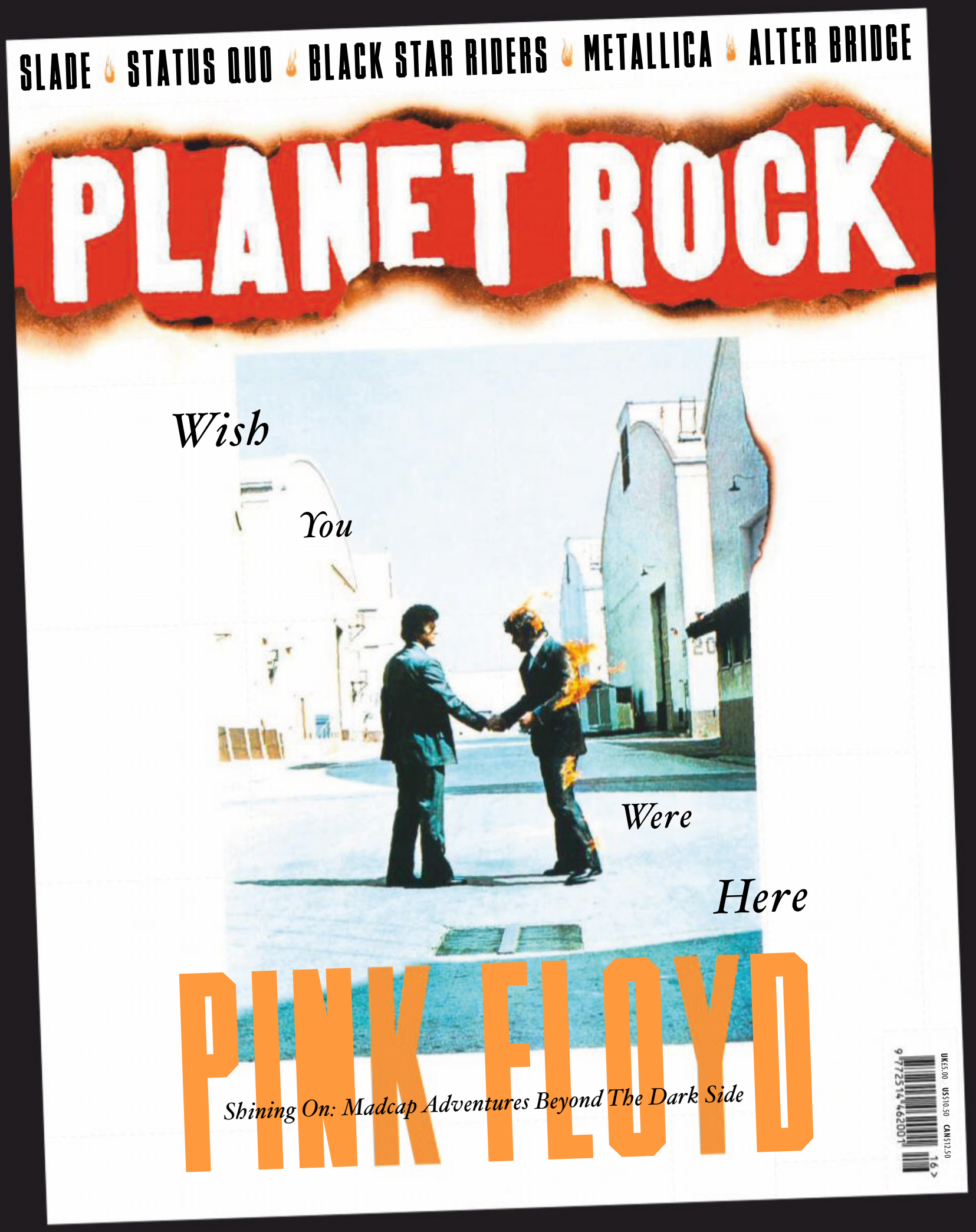
**"We were all living in this kind of twilight world."**
**ED HANDLEY**

Turner notes that the 25th anniversary of *(Bytes)* was nearly marked by a reissue with a bonus disc entitled Bits, featuring those early pseudo-acid house experiments, demos and a live show from the Ministry Of Sound. Of their old group, says Handley, "We're happy it's still going and we still feel connected to it. It felt like a beginning and a bit premature to just walk away. But we had to do it."

*Ian Harrison*

*Ken Downie was asked to contribute to this piece.*

# ADVENTURES BEYOND THE DARK SIDE




## ISSUE 16 ON SALE NOW!

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Inscrutable musical genius: Steve Winwood, marvel of the Midlands.

# Steve Winwood

Platinum-voiced polymath.
By **Andrew Male**.

WHEN STEVE Winwood released his second solo album, *Arc Of A Diver*, on New Year's Eve 1980, he was just 32 years old and already a music industry veteran of more than 20 years standing.

Raised amidst the suburban greenery of Birmingham's Perry Barr, by an extended family of performers and a father who was a part-time bandleader and saxophonist, Winwood was a prodigy, a shy and reserved child who could literally play any instrument he wanted – saxophone, piano, mandolin, guitar, trumpet – and copy any tune he heard, whether it be Bach, Oscar Peterson or Wesleyan hymns.

After the 12-year-old Steve started playing upright piano in his older brother Mervyn 'Muff' Winwood's jazz band, he also discovered Ray Charles and, in Muff's words, "became a soul singer overnight", quickly attracting the attention of a local folk-blues musician, Spencer Davis.

Spotted by Island Records' boss Chris Blackwell, The Spencer Davis Group quickly went from Midlands R&B sensation to chart-toppers, but Winwood, dissatisfied with pop life, left the group in 1967 to form the pastoral psych dreamers, Traffic, with drummer Jim Capaldi, guitarist Dave Mason, and multi-instrumentalist Chris Wood.

From the spooked, ethereal communion that is 1967's *Mr Fantasy*, to the hypnotic stoner prog of 1971's *The Low Spark Of High Heeled Boys*, Traffic play a central but not overriding role in this How To Buy. After all, here is someone who guested on albums by Jimi Hendrix, Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, Lou Reed, John Martyn, George Harrison, McDonald & Giles and Marianne Faithfull, played in bands with Eric Clapton and Ginger Baker, recorded numerous solo albums and guested on other artists' long-players. For this guide the 10 chosen recordings best represent the many aspects of Steve Winwood, albums on which this shy and often inscrutable musical genius is most visible and extraordinary to behold.

**"Here is someone who guested on albums by Hendrix, Howlin' Wolf, Lou Reed, George Harrison…"**



**CAST YOUR VOTES…**

**This month you chose your Top 10 Steve Winwood LPs. Next month we want your Top 10 Christmas LPs. Send selections to www.mojo4music.com or e-mail your Top 10 to mojo@bauermedia.co.uk with the subject 'How To Buy Christmas' and we'll print the best comments.**

## 10 Eric Clapton & Steve Winwood

Live From Madison Square Garden

REPRISE, 2009 **£11.99**

**You Say: "Two old masters playing up a storm… terrific." Ed Holt, e-mail**

Instead of the original Blind Faith album from 1969 – an album recorded hurriedly, in an atmosphere dank with bad karma and containing a 15-minute Ginger Baker jam that not even Ginger Baker fans like – we chose this live collection from 2009. Covering two CDs, it finds both players revisiting the crossed paths of their past with a lightness and dexterity that's utterly refreshing. Highlights include Winwood retooling his epic Hammond work on a 16-minute Voodoo Chile, and Tell The Truth, which gives you a taste of what Derek And The Dominos might have sounded like if Steve had joined, as planned.

## 4 The Spencer Davis Group

Eight Gigs A Week

ISLAND, 1996 **£10.10**

**You Say: "He'll always be Stevie Winwood to me." Steve Sykes, e-mail**

Subtitled *The Steve Winwood Years*, this marvellous two-disc collection brings together every 7-inch, EP and LP that Winwood recorded with his Brumbeat R&B combo between 1964 and 1967. All the hits are represented – Gimme Some Lovin', I'm A Man, Keep On Runnin' – alongside a raft of surprisingly heavy B-sides (Stevie's Blues, High Time Baby) and defiantly hep cover-versions (Every Little Bit Hurts, Drown In My Own Tears, I Washed My Hands In Muddy Water). The perfect showcase for Winwood's effortless teen-age style across Hammond organ, guitar, and harmonica, and not forgetting his astonishingly mature pipes, and eerily accurate Ray Charles impersonation.

Getty, Shutterstock

## 9 Third World
Aiye-Keta

ISLAND, 1973. **£23**

**You Say: "Love that Third World album." D. Strauss @ straussberliner, via Twitter**

Not the Jamaican reggae group, but a knockout 1973 Winwood project produced and recorded following the dissolution of Traffic Mk 2 and around the time the fired-up talent was promising "an album a week". *Aiye-Keta* is a collaboration between Winwood, the legendary Afro-rock drummer Remi Kabaka and Osibisa multi-instrumentalist Abdul (Loughty) Lasisi Amao, and features five Remi pieces with a wired Steve on keyboards, percussion, Moog, vocals and super-nasty fuzzed-up guitar. The free-form Afro-spiritual jazz-funk calls to mind everything from Demon Fuzz's *Afreaka!* to Don Cherry's *Organic Music Society*. If this was a US private press, the heads would be all over it. Kabaka's son is a member of Gorillaz.

## 8 Steve Winwood
The Finer Things

ISLAND, 1995, **£24.23**

**You Say: "An excellent aerial view with some brilliant obscurities." Robert Pritchard, e-mail**

Choosing records from all aspects of Steve Winwood's career will inevitably leave a lot of stuff out, but this superb 4-CD comp from 1995 will help fill the numerous gaps. Alongside judiciously chosen Spencer Davis Group and Traffic selections, there are two tracks recorded with Eric Clapton in 1966 for the aborted Joe Boyd studio project Powerhouse, five of the strongest Blind Faith cuts (studio and live), plus an excellent overview of his often erratic '80s and '90s solo career. Best of all, you get all three of the melancholically surreal tracks he recorded with Vivian Stanshall, including the exquisite 11-minute Dream Gerrard.

## 7 Stomu Yamashta's Go
Go Live From Paris

ISLAND, 1976 **£16.41**

**You Say: "A deep cut to be sure, but a rewarding one." Brian Shaw, e-mail**

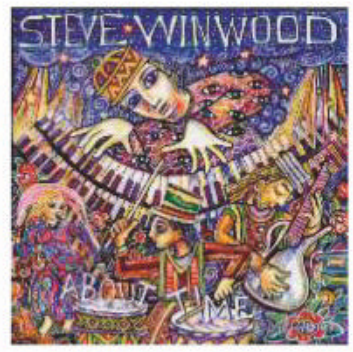
An orchestral space-rock opera, overseen by the revered Japanese jazz percussionist, with soaring strings by Paul Buckmaster, cosmic synth drones by Klaus Schulze, in-the-pocket drumming from Santana's Michael Shrieve, 'Great Gig'-style backing wails from female vocal group, Thunderthighs, and Floydian guitar and vocals from our man Winwood. Recorded during a mid-'70s period of intense activity that also saw him playing guitar with the Fania All-Stars on their 1976 disco-salsa fusion LP, *Delicate & Jumpy*, this is boardroom prog-kosmische, somewhere between *Wish You Were Here*, Jeff Wayne's War Of The Worlds, and a full-orchestra blow-out rework of Miles's *On The Corner*.

## 6 Traffic
Mr. Fantasy

ISLAND, 1967. **£5.92**

**You Say: "His best. If you want an archetypal British '60s psychedelic record that's not *Sgt. Pepper*, this has you covered." Eddie Robson, @EddieRobson, via Twitter**

When Winwood left The Spencer Davis Group he was a musically mature but socially naive 19-year-old, already battered by fame. "He's not on this planet, he's somewhere else," said Traffic drummer Jim Capaldi, and jamming with the group at Sheepcote Farmhouse in Berkshire, this new quartet created a stoned pastoral soundtrack that captured that "somewhere else" state. Scattershot, whimsical and fried, it's an album given over to two personalities, guitar man Dave Mason crafting a lysergic toy-town childhood, and Winwood affecting psychedelic enlightenment. The self-titled follow-up might be the more mature work, but this is the true time capsule.




## 5 Steve Winwood
About Time

SANCTUARY, 2003, **£4.98**

**You Say: "Fabulous back-to-basics restatement of what makes him so good." Will Griffin, e-mail**

His first solo effort since the horribly overproduced *Junction Seven* (1997), *About Time* is that most unexpected occurence, a post-'80s Winwood recording in tune with the raw and spooked genius of his past. With no synthesizers, no backing singers, and a super-basic Latin line-up of Winwood on Hammond B3 organ and vocals, José Neto on guitar and Walfredo Reyes Jr on drums, the 11 tracks offer a rough-edged, light-patterned paring of the soul, a slow returning to reality from a man too long hiding in the shadows. The War-style conga-groove cover of Timmy Thomas's Why Can't We Live Together is particularly special.

## 3 Traffic
John Barleycorn Must Die

ISLAND, 1970 **£6.49**

**You Say: "Progressive, improvisational, folky – still sounds new." Dave Corrin, via e-mail**

After dropping out of Ginger Baker's Air Force, Winwood returned to the idea of a solo album. However, after drafting in Capaldi and Wood, Traffic Mk 2 was born. Centred around a folk-baroque interpretation of an 18th century folk broadside first heard on The Watersons' 1965 album *Frost And Fire*, *John Barleycorn Must Die* is a singular showcase of Winwood's uncanny ge nius, from the opening jazz piano riff on soul-jazz groover Glad, to the eerily luminous side two, here is Winwood as a haunted man "turned to shadow" (Stranger To Himself), cursed with the ability to spin magic from guitar, keyboards and that unearthly, impassioned voice.

## 2 Steve Winwood
Arc Of A Diver

ISLAND, 1980. **£5.52**

**You Say: "Fascinated by idea of *Arc Of A Diver* as first album of the '80s. Embrace of technology as a way forward…" Peter Relic @peterrelic via Twitter**

Since leaving the SDG, Winwood had longed to produce a solo album where he played every instrument. Now, holed up in the small home-built studio on his 50-acre Cotswolds farm, with a cheap drum machine and a bank of bright new synths, he did just that. Thanks to lyricists Stanshall, Will Jennings and George Fleming, Steve's existential crisis as a man alone in the world was externalised beautifully. And while the sterile synths have not aged well, they create the right protective atmosphere for confessional vocals and divine melodies, and establish the chilly white-room white soul sound of the coming decade.

## Traffic
The Low Spark Of High Heeled Boys

ISLAND, 1971, **£6.49**

**You Say: "Jazz, prog, funk and blues in one seamless package… the essence of Winwood." Graham Lloyd, e-mail**

The idea arrived in the summer of 1970, when Traffic were in Morocco, waiting to provide a "spontaneous" score to an improvised film by a Dutch director, Antoine Coyas, about a hippy dropout (Michael J. Pollard) travelling the world in a guitar-shaped bus. Coined by the American actor Pollard, in reference either to Traffic's music, or his own rebel cowboy-booted attire, the title nonetheless encapsulated the group's new sound. Augmented by Family/Blind Faith bassist Ric Grech, session drummer Jim Gordon, late of Derek And The Dominos, and percussionist Rebop, Winwood, Capaldi and Wood create a languid, free-flowing, stoner odyssey, a surreal, sunken prog-jazz groove anchored by complex African rhythms and Winwood's air-gliding dream-soul vocals.

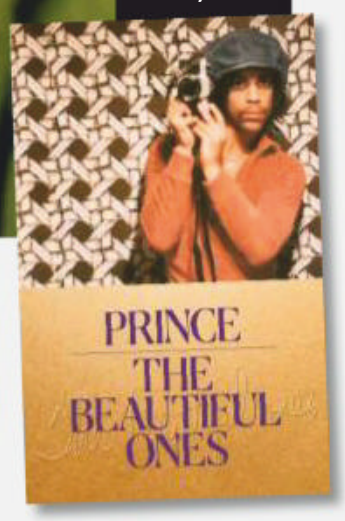
### NOW DIG THIS

Just missing the cut is Will Powers' *Dancing For Mental Health*, the 1983 satirical self help album devised by photographer Lynn Goldsmith. Winwood co wrote half of the eight songs, contributed keyboards and guitar, and helped to create the stripped down New York City synth funk sound that fellow collaborator Nile Rodgers said helped to define the pop sound for the next few years. The best live overview is 2017's *Greatest Hits Live*. Documentary wise, the BBC's English Soul is availa ble on YouTube, while the Traffic Live At Santa Monica 1972 DVD (Cherry Red) is steep but amazing. The most recent and thorough biography is John Van der Kiste's While You See A Chance (Fonthill, 2018).

Laidback licks: Prince makes sheet music, 1978.

# Purple heart

Despite its troubled provenance, Prince's posthumous memoir is a triumph. By **Ben Thompson**.




## The Beautiful Ones

★★★★★

Prince

CENTURY. **£25**

FOR THOSE too emotionally invested in the prospect of The Beautiful Ones – and all the many ways this project could have gone horribly wrong – to wait 'til the last paragraph for an overall verdict, 'Posthumous Prince Smorgasbord Snatches Joy From The Jaws Of Despond' should just about cover it.

Despite its doom-laden provenance (Prince hires unknown white man to co-write memoir; Prince signs contract; Prince hand-writes 28 pages of childhood reminiscence in an improbable burst of autobiographical energy; Prince dies), The Beautiful Ones rivals Beastie Boys Book – or even your favourite Prince song – as a masterclass in the bottling of its subject's seductive essence.

Credit for this near-miracle divides three ways. It goes first to the unhappy accident of Prince's death, which obliged so much of this book to be written in the third person (or, more accurately, someone else's first person); second to his co-writer-turned-'editor' Dan Piepenbring for making himself the conduit for the reader's meeting with Prince without hogging too much of the spotlight; and third, and most importantly, to Prince himself, for having so much of that seductive essence to spread around in the first place.

The third of this book's four sections – a previously unseen photo diary compiled in the four months leading up to the release of the precocious 19-year-old's debut album in April 1978 – is not just one but a whole sequence of money shots, a celestial compendium of gender-fluid charisma and goofy schoolboy humour whose many Prince-penned captions include the immortal "The wind does great things for one's hair". No less psycho-sexual fascination is afforded by part two, a bite-sized, apparently off the cuff and almost entirely uncorrected remembrance of Prince's past which offers way more compelling insights into the author's own personal and musical development than you'll find in the average 600-page doorstop.

While those who read The New Yorker extract may feel that they are already up to speed with Piepenbring's extended introductory account of his meetings with Prince, in fact the abridgement did a disservice to a piece of writing which is, in its complete form, as tender and nuanced an account as this delicate situation could have hoped for. It's the intimacy of these early exchanges – "Suddenly my nose was in his hair"! – that sets the tone for what follows, and only with The Beautiful Ones' final section, an annotated draft screenplay of Purple Rain, does Prince's liquid grace start to freeze into self-perpetuated myth. Elsewhere, his presence in this book is so strong that it's hard to believe he has really left the building.

## Face It: A Memoir

★★★★

Debbie Harry

HARPER COLLINS. **£20**

**An unorthodox, occasionally shocking glimpse of the Blondie singer's inner life.**

Harry's interviewers rarely find her keen to open up, so kudos to MOJO's Sylvie Simmons – this snappy, chatty tome's co-author – for guiding her so far down that path. Face It is strong on Harry's childhood – adopted by a New Jersey couple, steeped in '50s normalcy – with Harry attributing an enduring background unease ("I was always, always afraid") to her abandonment, and recounting troubling early instances of sexualisation: an indecent exposure when she was eight was not the last. Harry's quirks are manifested in a narrative that rambles liberally, photos that are augmented/defaced by scrawled text and cartoons and four sections of full-colour fan art, and while her tone is oddly cool (a shocking robbery/rape, early in Blondie's existence, is recalled matter-of-factly), she's good on *milieu* – eg, the late-'60s New York that awakened her bohemianism. A second volume is intimated but this is surely – in a good way – all the Debbie Harry you need.

*Danny Eccleston*

## Echoes: The Hampton Grease Band, My Life, My Music And How I Stopped Having Panic Attacks

★★★

Glenn Phillips

SNOWSTAR PUBLISHING. **£15**

**US cult guitarist and Peel fave's colourful odyssey – with free CD and DVD**

As avant-rock footnotes go, Glenn Phillips has two of the best. He was a founding string-burner in Georgia extremists the Hampton Grease Band; their 1971 Columbia double LP, *Music To Eat*, a legendary disaster at the cash register, is now recognised as an epic of psychedelic dada and improvising fire. Then 1975's DIY instrumental firestorm *Lost At Sea*, which John Peel played in heavy rotation, led to Phillips's signing by the Gong-era Virgin Records. It may seem like slim diggings for a full-on memoir. But Phillips's account of growing up wild in the acid-age South – a shattering adolescence; making mayhem with the Grease Band; passing adventures and hard lessons with the Allman Brothers, Lowell George and Frank Zappa – is compelling and poignant, a solitary mission that runs through the solo years, right up to *The Dark Parade*, the guitarist's new album included free with this life story.

*David Fricke*

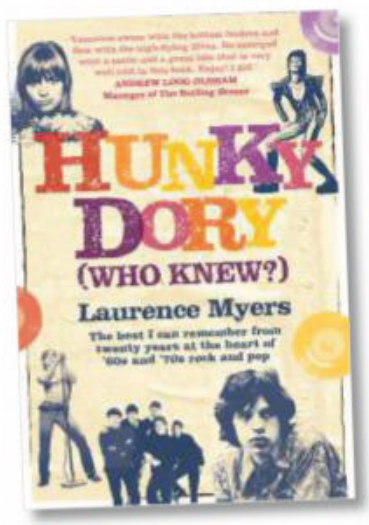
## Hunky Dory (Who Knew?)

★★★★

Laurence Myers

B&B BOOKS. **£20**

**Former music exec's memoir has walk-on parts for Bowie, Jagger and more.**




Ex-Rolling Stones manager Andrew Loog Oldham describes Laurence Myers here as someone who "swam with the bottom-feeders and flew with the high-flyers… and emerged with a smile and a great tale." Myers began his music biz career as the Stones' accountant, setting up a pension fund for Mick Jagger ("After all, I'm not going to be singing rock'n'roll when I'm 60," Jagger tells him), forming Gem Records and signing Bowie, before moving into film and theatre production. In this briskly told memoir, he emerges as the ideal lunch date, full of anecdotes and bon mots between courses. Myers' defence of the much-maligned Allen Klein is illuminating; his Stones and Bowie trivia peerless, and his wry asides – "Needless to say I didn't mention the subject of Eric Burdon's cock…" – all make Hunky Dory wickedly good fun.

*Mark Blake*

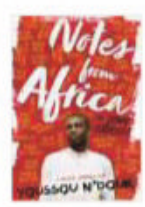
## Notes From Africa: A Musical Journey With Youssou N'Dour

★★★

Jenny Cathcart

UNBOUND. **£12.99**

**Talking mbalax – a Senegalese success story.**




Intertwining the story of the singer, now 60, with the rebirth of Africa, Cathcart traces the journey of a boy from the backstreets of Dakar to the croquet lawns of England. The author worked for Youssou in the 1980s, and some events put her in an awkward position: such as when he dumps his long-time band; and accusations of ruthlessness against a man who employs 800 and is worth £100 million are sidelined without investigation. However, Cathcart's understanding of the region and of the significance of griots is excellent, as is her analysis of the seeming impossibility of making music to satisfy two audiences – although N'Dour's finest (to these ears) album, 2002's *Nothing's In Vain*, gets not a mention.

*David Hutcheon*

©Joseph Giannetti

## That's The Bag I'm In: The Life, Music and Mystery Of Fred Neil

★★★★

Peter Lee Neff

BLUE CEILING. **£25**

**The extraordinary musical legend who wouldn't play the game.**

"You couldn't touch him," Dylan said of the late singer-songwriter Fred Neil, while Eric Andersen called him "a cross between a rumour and a legend." Blessed with the bluesiest baritone, he wrote secret classics, but also recreated traditional music in "his own light" (to paraphrase a friend). If most people know any of Fred's songs, it's Nilsson's cover of Everybody's Talkin'. The authentic heart of the Greenwich Village folk scene in the '60s, he was revered by Neil Young, Gram Parsons and countless others. (CSN were going to call themselves Freddie's Children; he "told them not to.") Moody and private, Neil seemed happier with dolphins and co-founded an organisation to free them from captivity, reflecting his own antipathy towards constraints. Author Neff has done an extraordinary job of thorough research and lean writing in the first major recounting of Neil's life.

*Michael Simmons*

## Jeff Buckley: His Own Voice

★★★★

Edited by Mary Guibert And David Browne

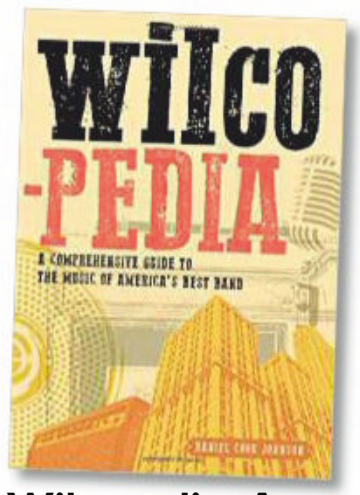
CASSELL. **£30**

**The late singer-songwriter's daydreams, nightmares and random deliberations compiled.**

Subtitled "Journals, Objects & Ephemera," this weighty coffee-table hardback makes no effort to present a biographical portrait, yet its nearly 300 pages offer an enormous amount of insight into the man and his artistry. Buckley was always jotting down – on whatever scrap of paper was available, particularly in spiral notebooks – his musings and goals, along with unrecorded song lyrics both complete and in fragments, plus lists, memories and whatever else came to mind. Fortunately, those original bits and pieces survived and hundreds of them are presented here for our perusal. Best of all, perhaps, are the journal entries, random observations and deep thoughts. "This is just writer shit," he says in one especially poignant entry before describing a benevolent encounter with a sex worker. It ends with a note to himself: "Stop smoking, stop smoking, stop hesitating, start flying." Chilling, enlightening, perceptive stuff.

*Jeff Tamarkin*

Getty




## Wilcopedia: A Comprehensive Guide To The Music Of America's Best Band

★★★

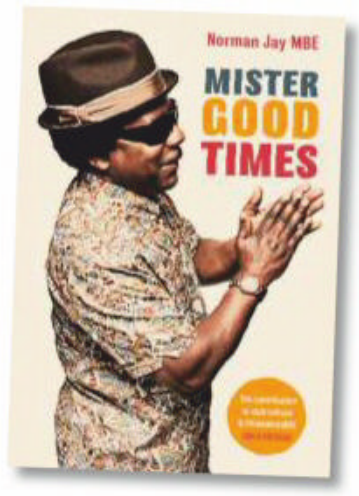
Daniel Cook Johnson

JAWBONE. **£14.95**

**Just the facts, ma'am: all the stats a fan could want on the career of Jeff Tweedy.**

As much as any not-(yet?) canonical rock band, Wilco warrants an assemblage of the details that dot their history. The numbers bear it out: in 25 years, 12 members have recorded 16 albums, made four films, and played 107 different covers. Fans obsess over setlists, B-sides, and stage banter. One of those fans is Daniel Cook Johnson, who began tracking Jeff Tweedy & co for the now-defunct Examiner website. Wilcopedia offers bios of each bandmate, notes each television appearance, and, of course, considers every song on every long-player, plus all those covers. Johnson is a cataloguer rather than critic. The book devotes bushels of words to the first time, last time, and total times each song has been played. Many of the stats may have been better conveyed visually as charts and graphs. Still, it's a useful tome for the fan to crack open whenever a Wilco record blares from the speakers.

*Chris Nelson*




## Mister Good Times

★★★★

Norman Jay MBE

DIALOGUE. **£20**

**Trailblazing British rare groove DJ and broadcaster charts his improbable rise.**

His father's decision to entrust nine-year-old Norman Jay to buy the records for a family party echoed throughout the child's subsequent life. Fellow vinyl junkies will relate to that pivotal first exchange, but most of Jay's story is unique unto himself. A "rebellious, football-loving, dandy soul boy" who devoured Richard Allen's Skinhead books and hustled to feed his habit, Jay began using his instinctive mastery of unheard grooves at 1980's Notting Hill Carnival. It was the start of an often fraught 33-year residency punctuated by cross-country clubbing adventures and the launch of Kiss FM, critical for disrupting the old guard's stranglehold on soul. While admitting to trousering insane spoils during the millennial dance boom, Jay humbly sticks to scrapes from the trenches that illustrate how his ability to trust his instincts, on and off the dancefloor, kept him credible while others faded away.

*Andy Cowan*

## The Ballad Of Jethro Tull

★★★★

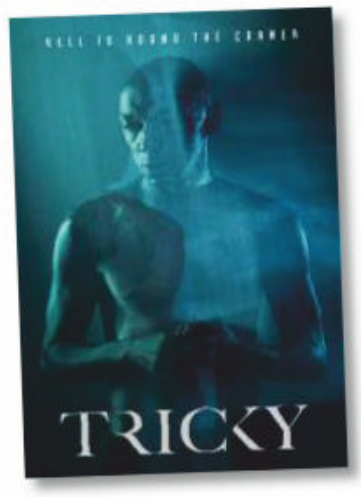
Jethro Tull

ROCKET 88 BOOKS. **£40**

**Lavishly tooled oral history. Pics indicate that they were indeed "different times".**

Deftly corralled by MOJO's own Mark Blake, this is a rollicking and ridiculous immersion in one of Britain's most knowingly absurd and slyly innovative rock bands, and though skewed toward the official (ie. Ian Anderson's) version of events, it's candid when it comes to intra-band bust-ups – notably Mick Abrahams' 1968 sacking – and the group's relative lack of success with the ladies (Anderson: "We were moderately ugly"). Cuttings kept by Anderson's mum plus rare pics take you back to a time when Tull shared stages with The Lurkes and Disturbance and rock stars weren't fully dressed 'til draped with a "dolly bird", while Anderson's two new spoken-word pieces, available via download codes, bring the story up to date. For the flusher fan, 275 nicker gets you the Signature Edition – in a clamshell box, with art prints and the new tracks on 7-inch vinyl. If not quite as thick as a brick, it would catch you a fearful clip.

*Danny Eccleston*




## Hell Is Round The Corner

★★★★

Tricky

BLINK. **£20**

**The world according to Adrian Thaws.**

Tricky earned his nickname because he couldn't be pinned down, which carried over to his music-biz dealings. His autobiography reveals a loner by nature who was four when his mother committed suicide. He discovered his extended family in Bristol were mostly gangsters; Tricky himself was more of a petty robber, and when it came to music, the aim was to "turn music upside down." His debut (don't call it trip-hop) album *Maxinquaye* went Top 3, which rattled his already weed/LSD-addled brain once anonymity was lost, expectations raised (Bowie wrote about him) and cocaine and easy money magnified dysfunction. Anecdotes abound – Perry Farrell baby-sitting Tricky's daughter; a pump-action gun under the bed; declining meets with Prince and Madonna – in this riveting, riotous saga with observations from family, mates and advisers. He never hit Top 3 again, but he's still alive.

*Martin Aston*

**Fred Neil, the heart of the Greenwich Village folk scene.**

# Shoot out the spotlights!

An epic, starry celebration of the folk rock master's 70th birthday. But where is he, asks **John Mulvey**?

## Richard Thompson
Royal Albert Hall, London

AT HIS 70th birthday party, it is as hard as ever to fault Richard Thompson's manners. He has invited a multitude of friends and family to help him celebrate, and each of them are granted an extended moment for themselves. Even when you're one of the greatest guitarists and songwriters of the past 50 years, it still seems rather bad form to upstage the guests.

So it is that this tribute show becomes a showcase for Richard Thompson's self-effacement as much as his genius. Over three and a half hours and 34 songs, he cedes the spotlight to an eccentric and illustrious glut of collaborators: David Gilmour, Bob Mould, Loudon Wainwright III, Derek Smalls, Hugh Cornwell, Maddy Prior, assorted Carthys and Watersons and, of course, the whole Thompson dynasty. As a way of illustrating how Thompson's music has intertwined itself with the ancient traditions of the British Isles these past 50 years, and how it has quietly informed and subverted a wide range of other music in that time, it's a brilliant success. As a way of allowing this most discreet of maestros to disappear, it often proves more frustrating than satisfying.

Does he really need to be playing second fiddle to Gilmour on his own Dimming Of The Day, or to his old schoolfriend Hugh Cornwell as they blam through The Stranglers' Peaches? Was it really worth Harry Shearer reviving his Spinal Tap character, Derek Smalls, so that Thompson can fleetingly show how his high-intensity detailing could have given him a career in thrash metal? Occasionally, Thompson doesn't just slip into the background, he leaves the stage entirely.

When the various incarnations of Fairport Convention came together for a 40th anniversary show at the Barbican in 2009, Thompson's reticence on stage was so pronounced, it seemed baffling how he had ever become a frontman. That same pathological discretion is apparent here, even though the very first song, The Storm Won't Come – from 2018, and one of his best in years – shows how forcefully he can lead as a stern harbinger of impending doom: stentorian of tone; surgically precise in his attack.

The Fairports, as it happens, are given mysteriously short shrift. Ashley Hutchings reads from his 1966 diary – "July 6: I suggested forming a folk rock band with Rich Thompson. We agreed to give it a go" – and plays an old country blues and Jack O'Diamonds with Thompson and Dave Mattacks.

MartinHarris/Capital Pictures (6)

Olivia Chaney contributes a slightly fussy Who Knows Where The Time Goes, and there's a massed finale of Meet On The Ledge, during which Simon Nicol sneaks on with a guitar, in spite of Thompson announcing earlier that he'd been stranded in Greece by the collapse of Thomas Cook.

There are more songs from the Richard & Linda era, but the duetting partners are, again, capricious. Old Fairports rogue Dave Pegg essays a frail Down Where The Drunkards Roll, Kate Rusby a decent Withered And Died, while Eliza Carthy brings the house down with an a cappella Great Valerio. It is both moving and exasperating, though, to see Linda Thompson herself take a seat by the stage during a garrulous version of I Want To See The Bright Lights Tonight led by Loudon Wainwright III.

Linda appears on-stage twice, supported by their children Teddy and Kami, to add backing vocals to That's Enough, a rabble-rousing and undervalued song from the 2014 Thompson *Family* album, and to the communal Meet On The Ledge. There is a tantalising moment in the latter when she seems about to conquer her dysphonia and take the second verse, but she never quite makes it to the microphone. Thompson looks around the band, and nods for first Gilmour, then his son-in-law James Walbourne, to take solos instead.

In the midst of all this, the highlights are perhaps predictably obtuse. Two contrasting songs from the '80s stand out. Ghosts In The Wind is a small masterpiece of glance and nuance, Thompson making the most delicate acoustic feints around the jazz double bass of Danny Thompson. Turning Of The Tide, on the other hand, is invigorated by Bob Mould – a perfect match for Thompson's frenzied uptightness – to such a degree that it more closely resembles Hüsker Dü than the 1988 original.

Three hours later, there is one more guitar face-off, as Thompson and Gilmour trade solos – the host's needling and meticulous, the guest's expansive wallows – on a version of the Floyd's Fat Old Sun. But this is not really a night for guitar fireworks, and there are no long electric workouts like The Calvary Cross or Sloth. Instead, it's a cosy extravaganza which presents Thompson as a constant presence on the periphery of great music and the mainstream. A generous and selfless community organiser. A fastidious enemy of self-indulgence. A maestro of restraint, working out how to succeed at his craft, and stay more or less invisible, at the same time.

**"Ghosts In The Wind is a small masterpiece of glance and nuance."**

Meet on the stage: Richard Thompson celebrates with (right, from top) Marc Ellington, Kami and Linda Thompson; David Gilmour; Eliza Carthy; Bob Mould; the assembled revellers.

**SETLIST**

The Storm Won't Come / Tobacco Road (with Hugh Cornwell) / Peaches (Cornwell) / The Most Beautiful Girl In Hollywood (Cornwell) / Blues In A Bottle (Ashley Hutchings, Dave Mattacks) / Jack O'Diamonds (Hutchings, Mattacks) / Down Where The Drunkards Roll (Dave Pegg) / Turning Of The Tide (Bob Mould) / If I Can't Change Your Mind (Mould) / Withered And Died (Kate Rusby, Danny Thompson) / As The Lights Go Out (Rusby) / The Bonnie Lass O'Fyvie (Marc Ellington) / Turtle Dove (Martin Carthy) / Fine Horseman (Marry Waterson, Carthy) / The Great Valerio (Eliza Carthy) / Hug You Like A Mountain (Eliza Carthy) / Beeswing (Alistair Anderson) / Madame Bonaparte (Anderson) / Persuasion (Teddy Thompson) / Ghosts In The Wind (Danny Thompson, Mattacks, Christine Collister) / Sweetheart On The Barricades (Danny Thompson, Mattacks, Collister, Eliza Carthy) / Who Knows Where The Time Goes (Olivia Chaney, Mattacks, Hutchings) / House On The Hill (Chaney) / Sheath And Knife (Maddy Prior, Chaney) / Grey Funnel Line (Prior, Chaney) / Keep Your Distance (Kami Thompson, James Walbourne) / That's Enough (Linda, Teddy and Kami Thompson, Walbourne) / Cry Me A River (Judith Owen) / She Puts The Bitch In Obituary (Derek Smalls, Owen) / Swimming Song (Loudon Wainwright III) / Bright Lights (Wainwright III) / Dimming Of The Day (David Gilmour) / Fat Old Sun (Gilmour) / Meet On The Ledge (Everyone)

# Run right back

The lonely boys' first show in four years is an intimate fan club-only affair. The hiatus is off, again. **Sylvie Simmons** celebrates.

## The Black Keys
Wiltern Theatre, Los Angeles

**SETLIST**
I Got Mine / Eagle Birds / Tell Me Lies / Gold On The Ceiling / Fever / Next Girl / Fire Walk With Me / Walk Across The Water / Everlasting Light / Howlin' For You / 10AM Automatic / Your Touch / Strange Times / Tighten Up / Thickfreakness / 10 Cent Pistol / Little Black Submarines / Lonely Boy / Lo/Hi / Go / She's Long Gone

IN A DRESSING room in an Art Deco theatre on the opening night of the Let's Rock tour – The Black Keys' first show in four years – Patrick Carney and Dan Auerbach are explaining to MOJO why they split. The short answer: touring. "Going out for years and years, from when you're young, and then crossing into your mid-thirties, you just feel like your life is fucking getting sucked out of you," Carney says.

"You have to stop," Dan Auerbach agrees. "We've got to have a nice balance where we're able to create music at least twice as much as we're on the road – that's sort of the equation. And when we create music, we're also able to be home and see our kids every day."

They say they're really looking forward to the show, but they look quite anxious. Nerves, maybe. On their last tour, Carney had to see a psychiatrist for stage fright. Auerbach says that an important reason for starting off in an intimate venue is that they'll have complete control over the sound, something he's serious about, which they don't get at huge festivals, like their next show in Las Vegas in two days' time. The other big reason: wanting to start out playing to, as Dan says, "people who actually give a shit about the band." Their fan club. All 1,850 tickets were sold at $25 through their official Lonely Boys And Girls Club fansite.

As MOJO takes her leave, in the street below – unbeknown to the band – all hell is breaking loose. Outside the front door there's a mob of people, pleading with or screaming at the theatre staff who've refused them entry. The tickets they purchased through online scalping agencies at colossally inflated prices don't have the special fan club bar code. Someone starts up a chant of "Let us in! Let us in!" that's taken up by the lines of punters stretching either side of the front door, who've been held up by the mayhem.

After the show begins, there's still people making their way inside. That these latecomers look positively joyful leads you to suppose that their rogue tickets won a last-minute reprieve.

At the back of the stage on a riser is the touring band: Delicate Steve on guitar; and Zach and Andy Gabbard on bass and guitar. The brothers are from Ohio, old friends of the Keys. Zach played at a launch party for The Black Keys' first album in 2002. Carney and Auerbach are below them, at either end of the stage, the gap between them occasionally filled when the latter launches into a particularly physical guitar break.

There's a lot of intense, gnarly blues guitar and riffage tonight, but the solos are characteristically short and to the point and the songs don't hang around too long. There's 21 of them, and only six are new. The rest span their entire career and the crowd sing along with gusto. What could have been a self-indulgent run-through of a new album feels more like a celebratory thank you to their fans.

Most of the new songs fit right in. Walk With Me is as catchy as it is heavy. Lo/Hi is T.Rex meets Free. Go's sing-along "whoo-ooo-oo" proves an instant success. Standouts among the old songs: power-house Strange Times from 2008; *Brothers*' Everlasting Light, a cool mix of falsetto and heavy drums; and *El Camino*'s Little Black Submarines, which starts with an Auerbach solo on acoustic guitar and keeps changing shape, from rock to folk, like a lava lamp that thinks it's Led Zeppelin.

Carney says nothing on-stage and Auerbach says little more, other than name-checking bandmates and thanking the fans. But the way they work off each other, the vibe between them, is still special. Earlier, talking to MOJO about their partnership, Carney said, "I really think that taking that time apart was necessary. And it was fun. But ultimately the biggest take away for me from those four years was the renewal of respect for my friend. We've been doing it for a long time now, almost 20 years. We push each other and we also know when to encourage each other. And it's hard to find a partner that can walk that basic line of when to push it and when to shut the fuck up and just get excited. You know?

"Yeah," Carney smiles. "That sums it up, I think."

**"We push each other and also know when to encourage each other."**
**PATRICK CARNEY**

Koury Angelo (4)

**Walk with me: (main) Dan Auerbach, gnarly blues; (insets, from top) Patrick Carney, heavy drums; ready for riffage; fans and band celebrate at the Wiltern.**

THE BLACK KEYS

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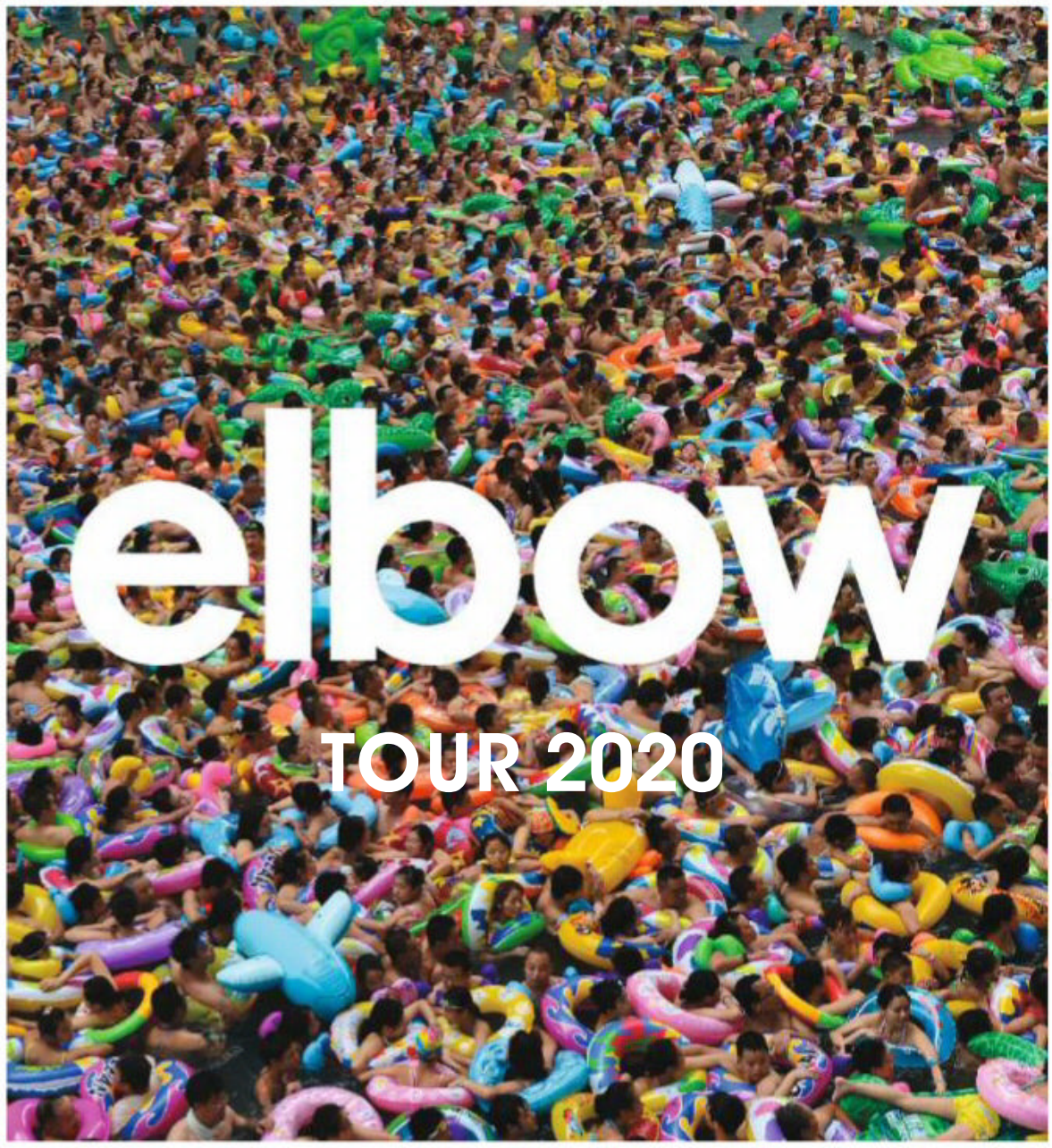


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31 LIVERPOOL EVENTIM OLYMPIA

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03 MANCHESTER O2 APOLLO

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06 LEEDS O2 ACADEMY

07 LEEDS O2 ACADEMY

08 HULL BONUS ARENA

10 EDINBURGH USHER HALL

11 EDINBURGH USHER HALL

13 GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY

14 GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY

16 NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY

SOLD OUT NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY

18 CARDIFF MOTORPOINT ARENA

20 PLYMOUTH PAVILIONS

21 PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL

SOLD OUT LEICESTER DE MONTFORT HALL

24 BRIGHTON CENTRE

25 BOURNEMOUTH INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

27 LONDON EVENTIM APOLLO

28 LONDON EVENTIM APOLLO

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28 LEICESTER DE MONTFORT HALL
30 CARDIFF ST. DAVID'S HALL

**DECEMBER**

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03 BRIGHTON CENTRE
05 LONDON EVENTIM APOLLO
06 BOURNEMOUTH BIC

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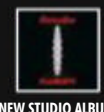

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SOLD OUT THU 05 NORWICH UEA
SOLD OUT FRI 06 CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE
SOLD OUT SAT 07 BATH PAVILIONS
MON 09 PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL
TUE 10 BRIGHTON DOME
WED 11 WATFORD COLOSSEUM
FRI 13 MANCHESTER ACADEMY
SAT 14 NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY
SUN 15 GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY
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**LEEDS**
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WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH
**MANCHESTER**
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THURSDAY 05
**NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY**

FRIDAY 06
**LEICESTER O2 ACADEMY**

SATURDAY 07
**NORWICH UEA**

MONDAY 09
**GLASGOW BARROWLAND BALLROOM**

TUESDAY 10
**LIVERPOOL MOUNTFORD HALL**

THURSDAY 12
**MARGATE WINTER GARDENS**

FRIDAY 13
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SATURDAY 14
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09 BIRMINGHAM ARENA
10 MILTO SOLD OUT ES THEATRE
12 LLAND SOLD OUT VENUE CYMRU
13 IPSWI SOLD OUT NT THEATRE
15 HALIFAX VICTORIA THEATRE
16 GLASGOW THE SSE HYDRO
17 LIVERPOOL M&S BANK ARENA
18 SOUTH SOLD OUT IFFS PAVILION
20 READING HEXAGON
21 BATH FORUM
22 BRIGHTON CENTRE
23 PLYMOUTH PAVILIONS
25 LONDON ROYAL ALBERT HALL SOLD OUT
27 STOKE REGENT
28 SHEFFIELD CITY HALL
29 NEWCASTLE CITY HALL
30 MANCHESTER O2 APOLLO

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03 LEICESTER DE MONTFORT HALL
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SAT 30 NOV
GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY

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TUE 03 DEC
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THU 05 DEC
LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY
FRI 06 DEC
LLANDUDNO VENUE CYMRU
MON 09 DEC
CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE
TUE 10 DEC
NORWICH UEA
WED 11 DEC
NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY
SOLD OUT
LONDON O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON

SAT 14 DEC
LONDON O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON
MON 16 DEC
CARDIFF UNI THE GREAT HALL
TUE 17 DEC
BOURNEMOUTH O2 ACADEMY
WED 18 DEC
BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY
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SAT 21 DEC
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NOV 29 THE AMERICAN BAR BELFAST
NOV 30 BRAID MUSIC CLUB BALLYMENA
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FRI 08 LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC
SAT 09 SHEFFIELD CITY HALL
MON 11 BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY HALL
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Smells like clean 'n' serene spirit: The Anti-Heroin Project at Abbey Road with Bucks Fizz (front row), Elkie Brooks (second row), Robin Gibb (third row), Genesis P-Orridge and Edwin Starr (fourth row), Hayley Mills and Aswad (back row) and more; (inset, from left) Fish, Nick Heyward and Suggs take five; (bottoym) the sleeve.

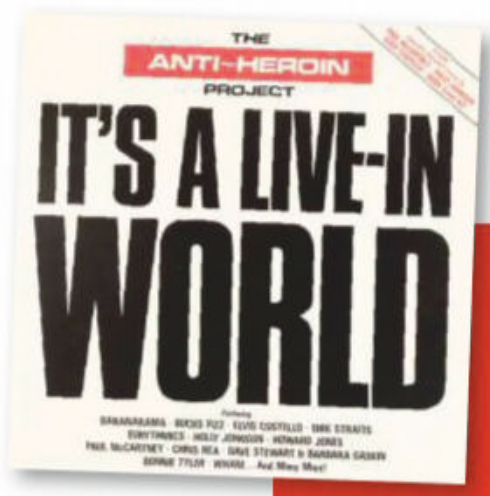
# NOVEMBER 1986
# ...The stars rock against heroin

**NOVEMBER 17** It was one of the most star-studded records of the year. Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr and Elvis Costello – not to mention Dire Straits, Eurythmics and Wham! – had all signed up for The Anti-Heroin Project's double album *It's A Live-In World*.

Initially, the auguries were good. Two years before, Bob Geldof and Midge Ure's Band Aid had gathered pop's great and good for famine relief in Ethiopia, and charity successes for USA For Africa and Artists United Against Apartheid, among others, followed. A celeb- packed anti-drugs record seemed sure to generate funds and awareness.

"It was my baby, a charity album dreamt up after losing a couple of friends to heroin addiction," says singer-songwriter-producer Charley Foskett. His campaign to raise money for the Phoenix House Charity for drug and alcohol rehabilitation got underway with a song called Slay The Dragon. Having recorded a demo with ex-Jeff Beck/Streetwalkers vocalist Bobby Tench, he sent it to Frankie Goes To Hollywood vocalist Holly Johnson, who agreed to participate. "I wanted the sound Holly had put into the songs on [1984 FGTH album] *Welcome To The Pleasuredome*," says Foskett, "and he nailed it in just a few takes."

As word got out, Hazel O'Connor and Jim Diamond offered to help. Foskett began contacting every recording act he could think of, and eventually took his project to EMI. "We managed to get a meeting with [A&R head] David Munns," says Foskett, "giving him a million reasons why he should sign our Anti-Heroin Project." EMI agreed a double-album and single deal, and gave Foskett "free run of Abbey Road for the sessions". Multiple artists' management were soon eager to get aboard.




**"Cliff Richard, Genesis P-Orridge, Jimmy Pursey, Aswad and more sang as one."**

The double album would feature existing songs and new recordings. The latter category included Ringo Starr, who provided two new Foskett-produced tracks: one was the vehement You Know It Makes Sense ("If you put a hole in your arm," it advised, "you must have a hole in your head!") while the satirical Naughty Atom Bomb featured him alongside John Cleese and Bill Oddie.

Elvis Costello donated a hard-hitting version of Richard Thompson's The End Of The Rainbow, also produced by Foskett, whose other contributions included Freak Street (a recording of a Kathmandu drug dealer) and the self-explanatory Scagg. Pre-existing tracks, meanwhile, included Macca's reggae song Simple As That, New Model Army's Heroin, Saxon's We Came Here To Rock, and Howard Jones's A Little Bit Of Snow.

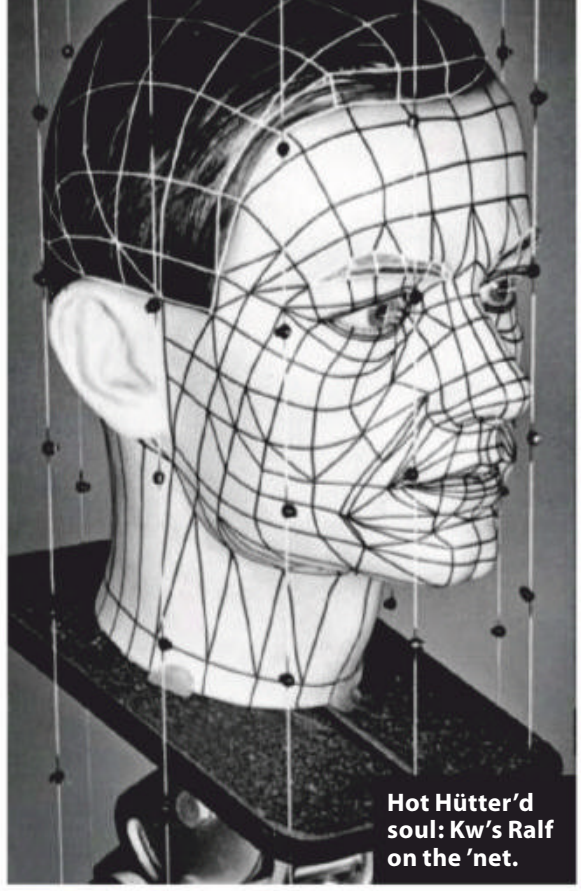
Yet the big production number would be the album's impassioned title track, released on 45 with a Band Aid-style video of the artists in song at Abbey Road and addicts in recovery at Phoenix House. Led off by Holly Johnson, Fish from Marillion, Nik Kershaw, Cliff Richard and Bonnie Tyler imparting the single's message of healing, the film soon revealed a huge cast of pop names, as Robin Gibb, Elkie Brooks, Kim Wilde, Poly Styrene, Suggs, Steve Harley, Genesis P-Orridge,

The Three Degrees' Sheila Ferguson, The Alarm's Mike Peters, Daryl Pandy, Hayley Mills, Jimmy Pursey, Aswad, Roy Harper, Sinitta, ex-Gillan bassman John McCoy, Chas & Dave, Tom 'Lofty from EastEnders' Watt, Hazell Dean – in a T-shirt that reads "Say No To A Fix in '86" – and more sang as one, backed by London session aces. "You'll be a slave to that white-powdered whore 'til the dragon is slain," the song warned.

Yet unlike the government's Heroin Screws You Up campaign, which began in 1985, or the Grange Hill Cast's single Just Say No, a Number 5 hit earlier in the year, both album and single failed to enter the public mind. Foskett says he had been offered a top job at the Home Office as David Mellor's right-hand man on the government's proposed anti-drug scheme for 1987, but declined, suggesting they combine their projects. He says he never heard from Mellor again, alleging that the Home Office instructed EMI to bury the release (EMI executives have denied any such ban). One way or another, neither the album nor the single registered on any chart. "After 20 months of my hard work around the clock in every major studio in London, absolutely free of any hire charges and/or session fees from any musician," he opines, "we had been gagged and buried alive big time!"

Today, Foskett, a cancer survivor twice over, continues recording and producing and is currently working on a folk album he promises will be star-packed. The Anti-Heroin Project's *It's A Live-In World* remains an intriguing document whose heart was definitely in the right place.

*Fred Dellar*



Hot Hütter'd soul: Kw's Ralf on the 'net.

# The Robots Return

**NOVEMBER 10** **Five years after their visionary *Computer World*, Kraftwerk release their ninth album, *Electric Café*. Working-titled Technicolour, then Techno Pop, the record was delayed after chief 'Werker Ralf Hütter suffered a head injury in a 1983 cycling accident, and a perfectionist dissatisfaction with mixing. Percussionist Wolfgang Flür, who leaves in 1987, wrote of poor in-group relations in his 2000 biography, I Was A Robot: "There was only cold coffee left in the *Electric Café*." The album reaches Number 58 in the UK and 156 in the US, though it does go Top 10 in Sweden.**

## ALSO ON!

### MARC NARKED

**Marc Almond** (above left) hits out at Radio 1 for what he claims is an official black-listing of his new single Ruby Red. "They've called me an unsavoury character," he says.

### BRAGG NICKED

**2** **Billy Bragg** is arrested and charged with cutting the wire around a nuclear bunker near Norwich. He is one of 600 arrested on the same day, many of whom had trespassed at US bases.

### RIP TRACY

**7** **Tracy Pew**, bassist with **The Birthday Party** and later **The Saints** and briefly **The Bad Seeds**, dies from a brain haemorrhage. He is 28 years old.

### MARR HURT

**14** **The Smiths** cancel their set at an Anti-Apartheid concert at London's Royal Albert Hall after **Johnny Marr** is injured in a serious road accident in Manchester.

### FREAK UNSEEN

**20** Psych-rocker **Zodiac Mindwarp** is struck blind following a show at Camden Palace. He says: "I came off and thought that me glasses had steamed up – then I remembered I wasn't wearing any." Zodiac's vision returns, luckily.

### BIG BOSS BOX

**29** **Bruce Springsteen**'s personally compiled five-LP box set *Live 1975-1985* debuts in the US charts at Number 1. Its record-breaking advance order is for over 1.5 million copies.

## TOP TEN

### UK INDIE SINGLES NOVEMBER 1

1. **LOVE'S EASY TEARS** COCTEAU TWINS 4AD
2. **THINK FOR A MINUTE** THE HOUSEMARTINS GO! DISCS
3. **STATE OF THE NATION** NEW ORDER FACTORY
4. **ASK** THE SMITHS ROUGH TRADE
5. **DICKIE DAVIES EYES** HALF MAN HALF BISCUIT PROBE PLUS
6. **REALLY STUPID** THE PRIMITIVES LAZY
7. **SMELLS LIKE... SHIT MIX** ALIEN SEX FIEND ANAGRAM/CHERRY RED
8. **HANG-TEN!** THE SOUP DRAGONS RAW TV
9. **THE PEEL SESSIONS** NEW ORDER STRANGE FRUIT
10. **CUT DOWN** RED LORRY YELLOW LORRY RED RHINO

The pong remains the same: ASF at 7.

Discy business: Young raver forgets vinyl, pumps up the Deutsche Grammophon.

# CDS ARE THE FUTURE?

**NOVEMBER 13** A new process for CD mastering is unveiled at the Audio Engineering Society convention in Los Angeles. Devised by Hamburg's Teldec Schallplatten GmbH, the technique is not dependent on a completely clean production environment and uses cheaper technology. The announcement comes as the popularity of CDs – by the end of the year some seven million will be sold in the UK, which now has four CD pressing plants – is affecting vinyl sales. As labels including Motown begin to delete back catalogue on wax, and home sound systems are increasingly being sold without turntables, the vinyl format's future looks in doubt.

## AD ARCHIVE 1986

If it's good enough for Joan Collins, this refreshing tequila cocktail will do nicely, barman. Important: "Recline casually when drinking."

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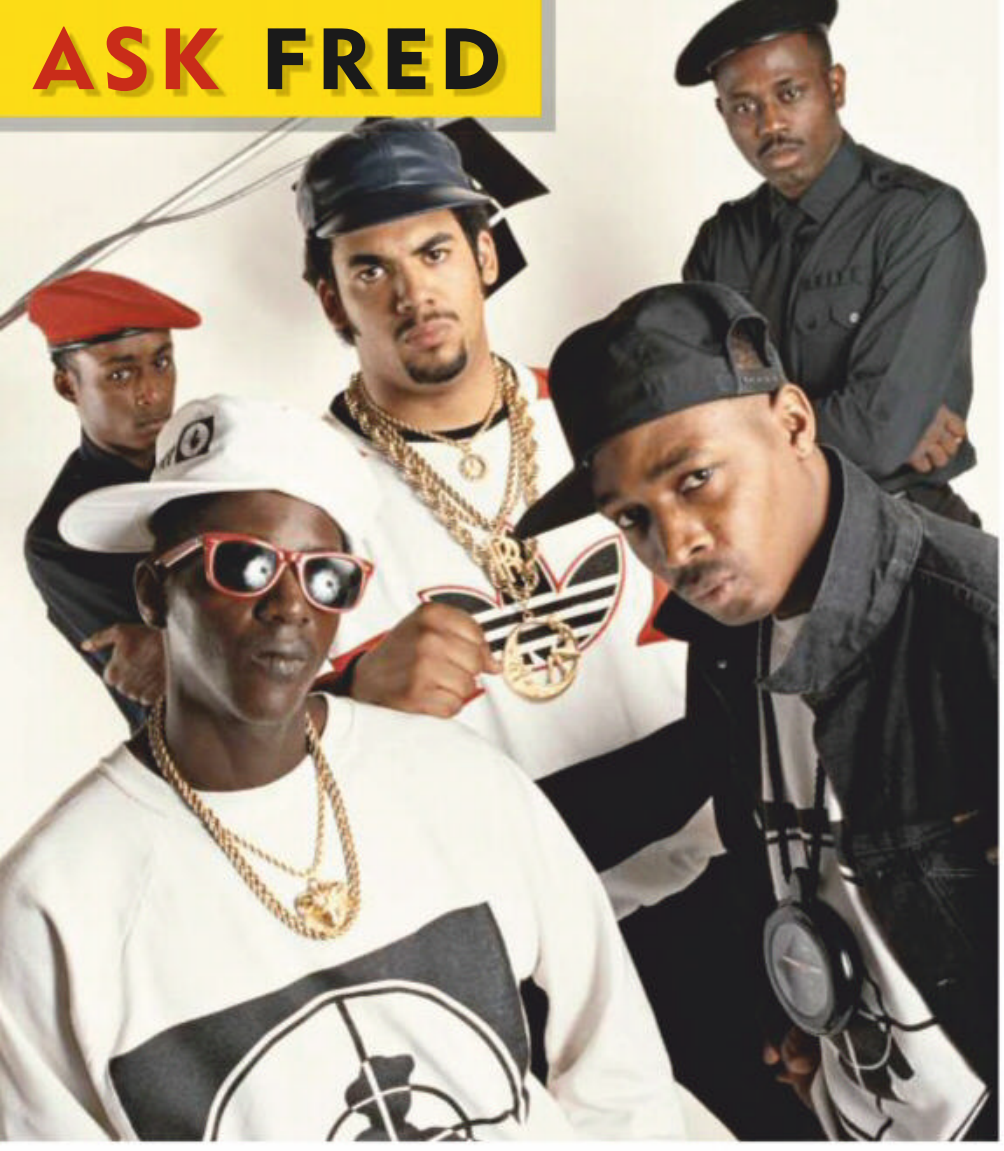

**Namesake, rattle 'n' roll: (clockwise from top left) Public Enemy with Terminator X (centre) and Flavor (front left); Sinatra with Frank Jr (left); Gentle Giant's 1972 album; Paul Buchanan.**

# Which band members ended up as song titles?

Roll up – **Fred Dellar**'s here with in-band ego trips, singing dynasties and footballing allegories.

**I recently discovered the rock band Help Yourself (which had a strong link with Man). I was amazed to realise that the title of their album *The Return Of Ken Whaley* comes from the name of their bass player coming back to the fold. Are there other examples of bands quoting their own members' names in songs or album's names? Apart from the obvious Ballad Of John And Yoko.**

***Vincent Prieux, Lyon, France***

**Fred Says:** Name-checking band members in song titles was quite prevalent in the era of jazz and swing. In 1936, for instance, Duke Ellington offered Concerto For Cootie for his trumpeter Cootie Williams; in 1950 Stan Kenton saluted his players with sides titled Maynard Ferguson, June Christy, Art Pepper and Shelly Manne; and later still Miles Davis came up with John McLaughlin as a track title on 1970's *Bitches Brew*. It's a rarer commodity in the rock'n'roll era, though not unheard of – for a flavour, see such in-band tributes as The Kinks' Mick Avory's Underpants, Bonehead's Bank Holiday by Oasis, Terminator X To The Edge Of Panic and Cold Lampin' With Flavor [Flav] by Public Enemy, Pavement's Westie Can Drum, Bonzo's Montreux by Led Zeppelin and Bring It To Jerome by Bo Diddley, a man whose willingness to sing about himself was legendary. To take things further, there are also plentiful bands who have tracks named after themselves (Talk Talk, Grinderman, Black Sabbath), acts who namecheck themselves in song (The Ballad Of Mott The Hoople, My Name Is Prince, Kevin Rowland's 13th Time), the fascinating 'We Are…' title sub-genre (examples include We Are The Clash, We Are The Pet Shop Boys, We Are Motörhead)… but we're getting sidetracked. We, of course, welcome your preferred suggestions for reader Prieux's original query!

## WHO SANG WITH THE GRANDKIDS?

**A friend informed me today that new artist Mabel is daughter of Neneh and granddaughter of the great Don Cherry. We were struggling to think of another three-generational musical dynasty, though twofold ones (Lennon/Ono, Waterson/Carthy, etc) there are aplenty.**

***Martha Farquahar, Newport***

**Fred Says:** The obvious contender is The Carter Family, whose Maybelle Carter was the mother of June Carter, who, in turn, was the mother of John Carter Cash. Other three-generation music dynasties include those of Bob Dylan (with son Jakub and grandson Pablo), Frank Sinatra (with son Frank Jr and granddaughter AJ Lambert), Fela Kuti (with son Femi and grandson Made), not forgetting Hank Williams, Hank Williams Jr and Hank Williams III. For multigenerational staying power, though, few can beat The Copper Family of Rottingdean, who can trace a folk singing continuity going back seven generations to the 18th century. As the late, great Bob Copper told MOJO in 2002, "There's singing beer and fighting beer, and we always drank singing beer!"

## DID GENTLE GIANT HIT THE HEIGHTS?

**All the hoo-ha regarding The Greatest Showman reminds me – didn't Gentle Giant have some sort of Barnum tie-up when they first visited the States?**

***Kelly O'Brian, via e-mail***

**Fred Says:** Yes, you're right, except that the connection was with a one-time Ringling Brothers Circus act rather than Barnum And Bailey. Seems that Columbia Records thought it would be cool if they got the World's Largest Man to accompany the group on-stage. Unfortunately, having signed the (allegedly) eight-foot-nine New Yorker Ed Carmel for the role, he died, age 36, just before the 1972 tour started.

## MORE ON DOC ROCK

**Re Dr. John. You asked for information on his Monkees association. Well, there's no bigger authority on The Monkees than Andrew Sandoval, and his Day-By-Day Story Of The Monkees book mentions a Mike Nesmith production called Impack Parts 1, 2, and 3, recorded at RCA Hollywood on February 17, 1968, on which the personnel includes Hal Blaine, Max Bennett and… Mac Rebennack on keyboard.**

***Brian Barry, Hemel Hempstead***

**Fred Says:** As reader Bob Walker also points out, Mac played with The Wrecking Crew too, who often played with The Monkees and regularly went uncredited.

## NILE BE THERE?

**Where is (ex-Blue Nile singer) Paul Buchanan? It's been seven years since his album *Mid Air*, which was amazing.**

***Dave Foster, via e-mail***

**Fred Says:** He sang at the 2016 BBC Bowie Prom and on Jessie Ware's *Glasshouse* album two years ago – the same year he told RTÉ's Ken Sweeney his new album was "two-thirds complete". Bear in mind, though, that when MOJO asked him about recording in 2014, Paul compared the process to, "You're walking down the street and some people are playing football, and they accidentally kick the ball to you… you just kick the ball when it comes."

## CONTACT FRED

**To get questions answered or help clarify a puzzle, write to: Ask Fred, MOJO, Fourth Floor, Academic House, 24-28 Oval Road, London NW1 7DT.**

**OR e-mail Fred Dellar direct at fred.dellar@bauermedia.co.uk**

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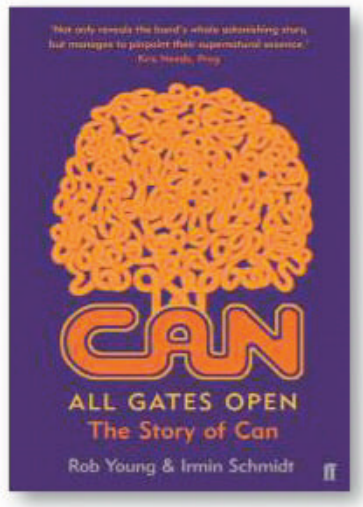


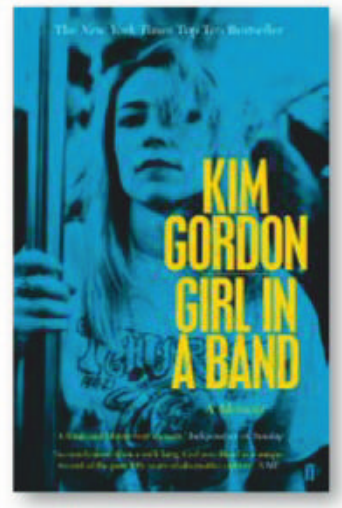


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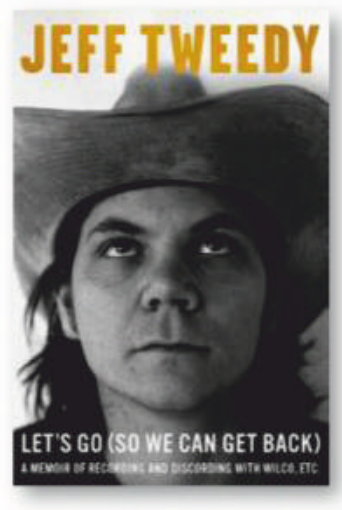


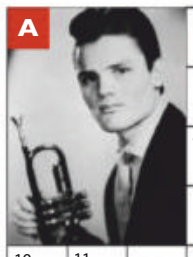


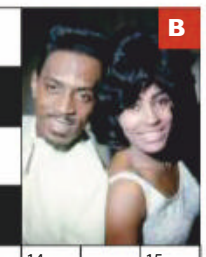

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## ANSWERS

### MOJO 311

**Across:** 1 Madonna, 5 Mad World, 9 Last Night On Earth, 10 Let's Go, 12 East Side Story, 16 None, 17 Lizard, 18 Kilburn Towers, 20 Dah, 21 Prize, 22 Steve Jones, 23 Pye, 25 Skeleton, 26 Bradford, 27 INXS, 29 Bio, 30 Mark Murphy, 33 Green Day, 36 Tea, 37/41 Gil Evans, 38 Luka, 39 Earl, 43 Tull, 45 Harm, 48 Colette, 51 Maurice, 54 Vee, 55 Utah, 57 Dawn, 58 Abacab, 59 Daft Punk, 61 Idiot, 62 Guerilla, 63 R Kelly, 64 Geddy.

**Down:** 1 Miles Davis, 2 Desmond Dekker, 3 Nine Inch, 4 Angie, 5 Myths, 6 Dinosaur Jr, 7 On And On, 8 Lotus, 11 Exit Planet Dust, 13 Alice Cooper, 14 Town, 15 Yesterday, 19 Teenage, 23 Proud, 24 Clem, 26 Bogle, 28 Small Change, 29 B.Y.G., 31 Keane, 32 Use, 34 Nash, 35 Andrew Gold, 40 Ace, 42 Vai, 44 Saffire, 46 Ava, 47 Men, 49 Loaded, 50 Travis, 52 RuPaul, 53 Can, 56 Edgar, 60 King.

**Winner: Tom McLeish** of **Barrhead** wins a Mojo/Poly DAC combo from Chord Electronics.

## ACROSS

**1** See photoclue A (4,5)
**6** Rock musical set in Rydell High School (6)
**9** Led Zeppelin's sixth studio album (8,8)
**10** Where Freddie King's Cannonball was fired (5)
**12** See photoclue B (3,3,4,6)
**16** Menswear single, did they receive a medal for it? (5,5)
**17** Bob Marley's 1978 album (4)
**19** Harry, his only UK hit was W.O.L.D (6)
**20** Goldfrapp's silver optic (3)
**21** Reggae singer who often teamed with DJ Chaka Demus (6)
**23** This Miles Davis release pictured Cicely Tyson on its cover (8)
**24** Could be Adler, could be Graham (5)
**25** C Major, for instance (3)
**27** ----- Sainte-Marie (5)
**28** The -------- Chocolate Drops. (8)
**31** James Brown was no fake in '88 (2,4)
**32** John Entwistle's middle name (4)
**33** Band with Honey Lantree on drums (10)
**34** How Portishead felt in '94 (4)
**36** Prog-rock outfit formed from former members of Uriel (3)
**38** Record label famed for such metal acts at Napalm Death (7)
**40** Buck from Blue Öyster Cult (6)
**41** A hard-to-find recording (6)
**43** Wu-Tang flag material (4)
**44** Humble, Randy or American maybe? (3)
**46** Traffic's was medicated (3)
**47** Peggy who recorded for Ode and married Quincy Jones (6)
**49** Chris, who was nearly dubbed Benny Santini by his label (3)
**51** Dead Or Alive's naked album (4)
**52** Record label launched by Elvis Costello (3)
**53** Their 1973 LP *Magical Love* is said to be the world's first-ever 3-D picture disc (10)
**55** AKA Matt Johnson (3,3)
**57** Buddy who charted with Party Doll (4)
**58** P.J. Harvey played every instrument (except drums) on this album (2,3,3)
**59** Country music outlaw Waylon (8)
**60** He was once part of N.W.A (4-1)
**61** Together – like a Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell album (6)
**62** An Ozzy Osbourne LP, it's not Primal (6)

## DOWN

**1** See photoclue C (7,9)
**2** Her biggest hit was Orinoco Flow (4)
**3** Placed in the wall by Pink Floyd (5)
**4** Ode To A ----- ---- (Paul McCartney) (5,4)
**5** That other Presley, from The Troggs (3)
**6** Embrace single with a bit of a pull? (7)
**7** Danny, scored Batman and Milk etc (6)
**8** Saint Etienne album with a Beach Boys connection (2,5)
**11** *Pass The Chicken & Listen*, they advised us in '72 (6,8)
**12** Making an effort, Macy Gray (1,3)
**13** Big band leader whose theme was Take The A Train (4,9)
**14** Paul Young's debut solo album (2,6)
**15** Rock musical or a Pet Shop Boys hit (4)
**18** Nilsson album named after a high-wire act (6,6)
**19** Stringed instrument linked with Alan Stivell (6,4)
**22** David Lee Roth reached the heights with this album (10)
**23** 24 -------- (Gene Pitney) (8)
**26** Carly Simon's 1976 album (7,6)
**29** Motown arranger Paul (5)
**30** The ---- Of The Game (Abba) (4)
**35** "Tin soldiers and Nixon coming" (CSN&Y) (4)
**37** In short, a concert or show (3)
**39** Wilkins or maybe K-Doe (5)
**42** Roy Orbison's possessive success (3,3,2)
**45** He originally headed Kilburn & The High Roads (3,4)
**48** ------- *Days* (Kirsty MacColl album) (7)
**49** Tom who had No Regrets in '74 (4)
**50** ----- *From Hawaii*, Elvis's live in Honolulu album (5)
**54** US city that's home to The Black Keys, Rachel Sweet etc. (5)
**56** Da thing Missy Elliott hit 'em with (3)
**58** Midge discovered in the picture (3)
**59** Half Japanese's Fair dealer (3)

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Brum velvet morning: Duran Duran Mk 1 (from left) Stephen Duffy, John Taylor and Nick Rhodes get ready for the '80s; (inset) Duffy's art school band logo.

# Stephen Duffy & Duran Duran

It began at Birmingham Poly with high excitement. Then a Wasp synth and Japan drove them apart.

## HELLO SEPTEMBER 1978

It was my first day at Birmingham Poly's college of art. I didn't even do art at school but I'd taken some photographs and maybe they thought I would liven the place up a bit. I was wearing a pair of dress trousers and this crazy woman's jacket and some winkle-picker boots, and I realised I was walking behind the guitarist from [local band] Dada, and the drummer from TV Eye and The Prefects [David Twist]. I couldn't believe it – people from actual bands! People I would have been far too scared to talk to at The Crown or The Golden Eagle.

I didn't talk to them the first day or the second day. But a couple of days later, John [then Nigel] Taylor got sort of separated from David and I went up and said, "Hi, I saw you in Dada, what are you doing at the moment?" And he said he wasn't doing anything. So we decided to start a band. That was literally our first conversation.

I went round to John's house in Hollywood. I played the bass and he played the guitar. I had loads of lyrics and tunes, and I'd written this song, Aztec Moon. So I played him that and a couple of other things. And he said, "I've got this friend, Nick." Nick [Rhodes, né Bates] was 16, a bit younger, but he'd already written to Morrissey about the New York Dolls, and he had a Wasp synthesizer.

John had seen Barbarella on the TV and talked about this great name for a band – I can't remember if it was originally Durand Durand, because that was the name of the character. Maybe I misheard him, but I printed up the name at art school the next day. But even if I had heard him correctly, I don't think there would have been enough Ds. I think I used them all up.

Brian Robinson Photography, Mirrorpix

**"I thought it had been an absolute triumph."**
**STEPHEN DUFFY**

## GOODBYE JUNE 1979

We did four gigs. First one at the art college, April '79, and the last gig was supporting Fashion at Barbarella's. I wore silk jodhpurs that I'd found in a sales bin in Wallis; Nick made this buzzing noise on his Wasp synth and for the first song I danced around and didn't sing. And as we came off stage I remember thinking – because I always think this about everything – that it had been an absolute triumph. But John immediately started bugging me about this record he wanted me to play – Life In Tokyo by Japan – saying this was what we needed to do. But I thought, Why would we want to sound like Japan when we can dance around to buzzing? No one was doing dancing to buzzing.

So that's when I thought maybe this was the time to be Bob Dylan and The Hawks. And I left Duran to form Obviously 5 Believers with [future Jacobite] Dave Kusworth. Of course, it was completely the wrong time to do that. We went to see Rough Trade, but Mayo Thompson said, "This is a bit too rock'n'roll for us." And the even stupider thing is that when *that* failed I went on to make records that were *far* worse than Life In Tokyo by Japan.

Did I ever regret leaving? Not really. John and Nick were the first people I'd met who actually admitted that they wanted to be famous. I didn't think people actually said that. I was still at that wanting to be a poet stage. When I look at them now, and when I talk to Nick and the others around the big birthdays, I think it's so lovely that they've had this relationship so long. Sometimes I think maybe if I'd have hung in there maybe I would have old friends too.

They're playing Vegas tonight. I don't think buzzing and dancing would have got them there. If I'd stayed, we would have ended up supporting Echo & The Bunnymen at the Lyceum or something. But being as big as the Bunnymen wouldn't have bought Nick the marble staircases in his Paris villa.

In 2000 I bumped into Nick at a Vivienne Westwood show, and we ended up rerecording those first Duran Duran songs [on *Dark Circles*, by The Devils, 2002]. When I got married, Nick made me this lovely recording, where he said: "I always wondered why Stephen left Duran. Then we made the Devils album, the worst-selling record of my career. And I thought, Thank God he did!"

*As told to Danny Eccleston*

Loco romos: the post-Duffy Duran; (left) Stephen today.

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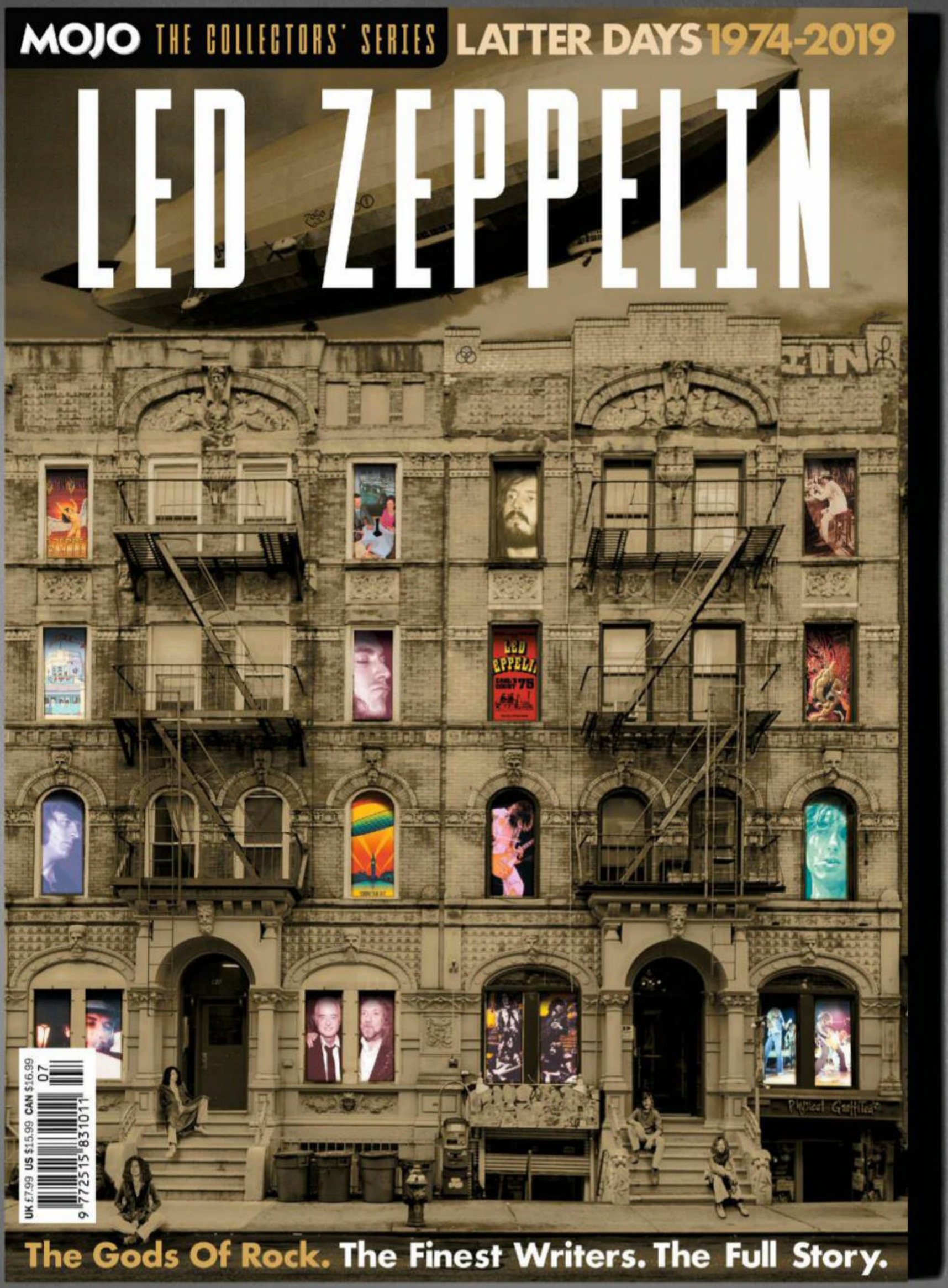
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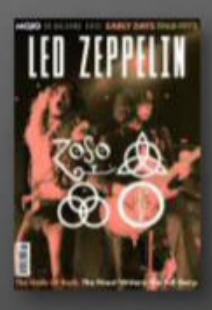


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